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THE BOOK ABOVE EVERY BOOK

A POPULAR ILLUSTRATED REPORT
OF THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN
BIBLE SOCIETY 1909-1910

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THE BOOK ABOVE EVERY BOOK



MORDECAI OF TANGIER,
WHO SOLD THE SCRIPTURES AMONG HIS FELLOW JEWS.

THE BOOK ABOVE EVERY BOOK

THAT WHICH IS PECULIAR TO THE BIBLE,
AND HAS CAUSED IT TO BE SPOKEN OF AS
ONE BOOK RATHER THAN MANY, GIVES IT A
VASTNESS BEYOND COMPARISON, SO THAT THE
GREATEST WORK OF INDIVIDUAL LITERARY
GENIUS SHOWS BY THE SIDE OF IT LIKE
SOME BUILDING OF HUMAN HANDS BESIDE
THE PEAK OF TENERIFFE. — *J. R. Seeley*

THE BIBLE HOUSE
QUEEN VICTORIA STREET LONDON

45204920 ✓

INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

Except where otherwise stated, the incidents and statistics in this Popular Report of the British and Foreign Bible Society belong to last year's record. It should be noted that this period is reckoned to end on December 31st, 1909, as regards the Bible Society's foreign work; and as regards its home work, on March 31st, 1910.

T. H. DARLOW,
Literary Superintendent.

THE BIBLE HOUSE,
August, 1910.

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“Other men’s writings are of such a kind that many a reader hath repented not a little of pains spent thereon. . . . But the man whom death overtaketh while with these writings his thoughts are busy, happy is he! For these then with the whole heart may we all be athirst; these may we embrace; in these have our conversation without ceasing; kiss these lovingly; yea, even die on these, and into these be transformed, since ‘studies’ (we know) ‘into manners pass.’ . . . These writings bring before thee, Reader, the lively likeness of that all-holy mind; and the very Christ himself in his talking, in his healing, in his dying, in his rising again,—the whole Christ, in a word, they so present to thy view, that if thou shouldst behold his form with thy bodily eyes, methinks thou wouldst see him less!”

Translated from the Latin “Paraclesis Ad Lectorem Pium” prefixed by Erasmus to the first edition of his Greek Testament, published at Basel, 1516.

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BOOKS AND THEIR VALUES.

WHEN we compare and contrast the precious things which have been produced by human toil and thought and skill, none of them appears more wonderful than a book. For books are an abstract and epitome of man's development. To explore their origin we must go back to primeval generations in the morning of the world, before history began. There could be no books before the art of writing; writing again is only a symbol for speech. How did men first learn to express their thoughts in spoken words? How did articulate sounds become crystalized into written characters? He who has the key to these mysterious secrets will find little left to marvel at in mechanical contrivances like paper and printing.

To say this, however, is not to deny that the mere body of a book possesses high importance and interest. So far as form and material are concerned, it seems that books once claimed kinship with trees.

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Many well-known words survive which testify to this derivation. For example, *liber* meant, first of all, the bark of a tree, and *codex* meant the trunk, while *book* is only the Saxon form of "beech," and *leaf* tells its own tale, corroborating the others, and we still speak of binding in *boards*. Yet, after all, these material and mechanical aspects of a book are no more than accidental things upon which its vital entity and essence in no way depend. The book is unaltered whether its chapters be stamped on clay cylinders, or illuminated on vellum scrolls, or rushed off a rotary press at the rate of a thousand copies every hour.

In these days, when new authors and fresh editions are poured forth upon us in torrents and cataracts, we sometimes question whether the enormous multiplication of books is an unmingled boon to mankind. To walk round some huge library like the Bodleian at Oxford affects many people with a profound sense of bewilderment and depression. An omnivorous student like Thomas De Quincey confessed that in such a place he always felt saddened by the thought that he could not hope to live long enough to read a tithe of the volumes which surrounded him; but ordinary persons turn away with a sigh of relief that of them no such task is required. They say to themselves that of making many books there is no end, and they feel secretly persuaded that only a few authors can be worth reading after all. Indeed, sensible men, as they grow older, will generally construct for themselves a private *Index librorum prohibitorum*, which often includes the bulk of so-called "literature." They simply refuse to open any books belonging to certain classes, in which they take no

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interest, or which they positively dislike. Even the most voracious readers recognize the truth in Bacon's maxim: "Some books are to be tasted, others to be swallowed, and some few to be chewed and digested."

In one of his delightful *Essays*, Charles Lamb has described the *books which are no books—biblia a-biblia*, "things in books' clothing perched upon shelves, like false saints, usurpers of true shrines." He says: "In this catalogue I reckon Court Calendars, Directories, Pocket Books, Draught Boards, bound and lettered on the back, Scientific Treatises, Almanacs, Statutes at Large . . . and generally, all those volumes which 'no gentleman's library should be without': the Histories of Flavius Josephus (that learned Jew) and Paley's Moral Philosophy. With these exceptions, I can read almost anything."

Vital Values.

How can we distinguish that vital quality which gives value to a book—by virtue of which it "doth show, contain and nourish all the world?" In his lecture *Concerning Kings' Treasuries*, Ruskin maintains that every real book embodies the best of a real man. It is written because the author has something to say which, so far as he knows, no one has yet said and no one else can say, and so he is bound to say it. In the sum of his life he finds this piece of knowledge, this vision of truth, manifest to him. This he has seen and known, and this, if anything about him, is worth remembrance. This is his writing, his inscription or scripture. This is a genuine book. And we only read it as it ought to be read, when we try honestly to enter into the author's thoughts and to share his passion. So

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Montaigne could say concerning his *Essais*: "All the world knows me in my book and my book in me." So Milton wrote in his *Areopagitica*: "A good book is the precious life-blood of a master-spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life."

The People of the Book.

The phrase which Muhammad commonly uses in the Koran to designate Christians is "the people of the Book." And we cannot refuse to recognize a fitness in the description. It is true, indeed, that other religions possess sacred writings of their own, to which they attach immense importance. But Christianity claims in a special sense to be a historic faith. That is to say, it is founded upon certain wonderful events and experiences, which actually took place in human history—events and experiences which, as Christians believe, contain and convey the revelation of God. Now the record of these events and experiences is summed up in the Bible. Outside its pages we have no sufficient or satisfactory knowledge concerning them. And thus our Christian faith connects so closely with the Christian Scriptures that we can hardly resent being called "the people of the Book." We claim, indeed, to be much more than such a title implies; but we must be poor, ignorant, imperfect Christians if we are less.

The Book of God.

To those who read this report, Christianity is the religion of the Bible. It is in the pages of Holy Scripture that we find ourselves face to face with One who is our Maker, our Redeemer, our Judge.

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Beyond any other means of grace our inward life draws from the fountain of the New Testament. Amid the conflict of ecclesiastical authorities our hearts pay homage to the Book of God. That sacred name is not used unadvisedly. For the dominating feature of Scripture is the way in which it discloses the converse of God with men, the intimacy between men and God. A divine Voice may indeed be heard in murmurs and undertones through many a poet and philosopher of ancient and modern times. But in the Bible—and nowhere else except in the Bible—that Voice grows clear and distinct, authoritative and unmistakable, until finally it speaks in the holy and awful accents of One who embodies all its meaning in Himself. In the Bible we see God drawing near to His children, preparing a chosen people to receive His message, and at last revealing in Christ His heart and will to the world. Now the Bible narrates this revelation in the words of the prophets and psalmists and saints and apostles to whom it was gradually granted. And the narrative is given in such a wonderful way that, as we read their testimony, we ourselves begin to enter into their experience, and thus the earthly record of revelation brings us also into fellowship with the Heavenly Revealer.

Men do despite to Holy Scripture when they praise what may be called its accidental features, and ignore its supreme quality and central function. Thus, for example, to admire the Bible chiefly as a treasury of sublime literature is to miss the mark: its real value is independent of literary form. It contains, indeed, marvellous eloquence and marvellous poetry. But the Lord is not in the eloquence,

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He is not in the poetry. He is in the still small voice which speaks quite as clearly in broken sentences and homely phrases, but speaks always with demonstration of the Spirit and with power.

When we are asked why we receive Scripture as the Book above every book, as the only perfect rule of faith and life, we answer with all the fathers of the Reformed Churches: "Because the Bible is the only record of the redeeming love of God, because in the Bible also we find God drawing near to man in Christ Jesus and declaring in Him His will for our salvation. And this record we know to be true by the witness of His Spirit in our hearts, whereby we are assured that none other than God is able to speak such words to our souls." His Book is far above every book, because it is the precious life-blood of the Master Spirit, embalmed and treasured up on purpose to a life beyond life.

There is only one Book for the Christian Church.

*"Hither, as to their fountain, other stars
Repairing, in their golden urns draw light."*

Almost all Christians formally admit this supremacy of the Bible. Even amid the darkness and confusion of the middle ages, its authority was never denied. Every mediæval theologian would have maintained that the whole doctrinal system of his Church was based upon Holy Scripture. The Reformers did nothing unusual, nothing opposed to the customs of the Church in which they had been bred and brought up, when they made their confident appeal to Scripture; and to begin with, at least, their opponents never challenged their right to make such an appeal. But to these Reformers the Bible was a personal,

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rather than a doctrinal revelation. They appealed to the Bible on the ground of their personal experience of what the Scriptures had been to them. They had felt and known that the God who had made them and redeemed them was drawing near to them in His Book, and there making manifest to them His power and willingness to save. So they made haste to translate and print the Bible for all sorts and conditions of men to read; because, with the Bible in his hand, a plain man could hear his Father's voice and learn his Redeemer's purpose and trust his Lord's promises.* In the Bible, as in no other book, we taste the good gift of God and the powers of the world to come. This is the sole and sufficient justification for a Bible Society.

The Test of Experience.

When we compare Holy Scripture in this way with other literature, we raise the grave question of how it should be read. In these days we are told insistently, "Let it be read like any other book." And we recognise deep wisdom as well as a fair challenge in the cry. But no great book can be appreciated properly, still less mastered, by a single perusal. And no book is read for the second time—unless it be merely as a pleasant diversion—in the same spirit and temper in which it is opened for the first time. A book which we take pains to study becomes its own champion, its own evidence. Now this holds true pre-eminently with regard to the Bible. The spiritual potency of God's Book can only be apprehended by familiar experience of

* Compare Principal Lindsay's *History of the Reformation*, i. 453.

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its contents, which deepens into wonder and awe as we realize its personal application, and hear an inward voice bearing witness with our spirits: "This day is this Scripture fulfilled for thee."

It may be said that such mystic Divine powers as these remove the Scriptures from the range of comparison with any other book that is published. Yet we shall learn a profitable lesson if we try to measure the Bible by a few commonplace criteria of popularity and influence by which other books are judged. We may apply to it the tests of circulation, of translation, of ubiquity, of cheapness, of vitality and of catholicity. And we shall find that, tried even by these standards, one Book comes out far, far in front of all the rest.

The Bible stands by itself, alone, with a wide gap between it and the remaining volumes of the library. No book but this deserves Victor Hugo's description:

"Le livre où Dieu se rend visible."

THE TEST OF CIRCULATION.

“There are men that will make you books, and turn them loose into the world, with as much despatch as they would do a dish of fritters.”
Don Quixote, ii. 3.

WE adopt the crudest and most elementary test which can be applied to any book when we reckon up how many copies of it have gone forth to find readers. Yet even in earlier ages, when each copy had to be written out by the hand of a scribe, this test could furnish certain reliable evidence as to the popularity of the work which was multiplied by such slow and patient labour. We have few statistics of the copyist's trade, and it is difficult to estimate the output of a monastic scriptorium. But from the number of manuscripts of various ancient books which have survived the ravages of time we may form some idea of the value set upon them in the past. Now there is no literary production of antiquity for which we possess anything like the same wealth of manuscripts as for the New Testament. All the extant plays of Sophocles we owe to a single manuscript preserved in the Laurentian Library at Florence. Of the New Testament there exist nearly 4,000 Greek MSS., more or less complete, besides over 8,000 Latin MSS. of the Vulgate version, copied when Latin was understood by every educated man in Western Europe.

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About the middle of the fifteenth century Gutenberg's printing press inaugurated a revolution which has not yet exhausted its results. By the miracle of type ideas could henceforth be made common property. It is significant that the first book to be printed in Europe was the Latin Bible, of which a hundred other editions appeared before the year 1500. Within a century of the invention of printing the Bible had also been published in German, Italian, French, English, Dutch, Spanish, Bohemian, Danish, and Swedish, as well as many times over in its original tongues. Since that time editions of the Scriptures have been multiplied in hundreds of languages, until the number of the volumes which have been issued defies all computation.

It is not altogether easy to arrive at a just comparison between the circulation of the Bible and the circulation of other books. Down to quite recent years publishers printed editions only on a moderate scale. When the history of publishing in England is written it may be found that the first modern book of which half a million copies were sold was Queen Victoria's *Leaves from the Journal of our Life in the Highlands*, which appealed to every one, and was issued at a low price. Now that novels as well as works of standard literature have begun to appear in extremely cheap editions, they go out in immense numbers which would have seemed incredible fifty years ago. Many illustrations might be given: we need quote only one or two leading examples. It has been estimated that no fewer than twenty-four million volumes have passed into circulation of the works of Charles Dickens. Of the novels written by Mrs. Henry Wood her publishers state that over five

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million copies have been sold. Mr. Hall Caine counts his readers by millions. In France the novels of Zola have reached a sale which exceeds two and a half millions, apart from translations. And in the United States vast circulations are claimed for American authors whose names are little known on this side of the Atlantic. To-day there seems hardly any limit to the vogue of a new book which appeals to the general taste and fascinates popular imagination.

We turn now to the circulation of the Scriptures. Consider, to begin with, the results announced by those great institutions which exist in various countries in order to make the Bible cheap and readily accessible. Last year the British and Foreign Bible Society issued 6,620,000 copies; the Scottish and Hibernian Bible Societies, 2,300,000; the American Bible Society, 2,826,000; German Bible Societies, about 900,000; Dutch and Scandinavian Bible Societies, about 400,000—making a total of over 13,000,000 copies. It must be remembered that the great bulk of these books are sold, though generally under cost price. To these must be added the Bibles sold annually by ordinary publishers—which at a very moderate estimate will amount to 2,000,000 volumes more. Thus we have a total issue of 15,000,000 new copies of the Scriptures, complete or in parts, which have gone into circulation in different countries during the last twelve months.

It is proper to observe, however, that of this enormous output by no means the whole consists of complete Bibles or Testaments. The great British and American Bible Societies, in particular, send out every year millions of separate Gospels and Psalters,

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mainly for use in the mission field. In China, indeed, where considerably over 3,000,000 copies were sold last year, these books consisted principally of Gospels or Psalters.

We may add that since its foundation in 1804 the British and Foreign Bible Society alone has issued more than 222,000,000 copies of the Scriptures, of which nearly 72,000,000 have been Bibles or Testaments in English.

* * * * *

Little need be said to emphasize the overwhelming eloquence of figures such as these. It is a simple fact that one Book is always in constant demand, and far outsells every other volume that is published. Not long ago an eminent bookseller in New York summed up the case when he said: "You may talk as you will of your multitudinous editions of popular novels, but the Bible leads them all, year in and year out." Judged by the test of circulation, this Book stands high above every other book.

THE TEST OF TRANSLATION.

*"Yet never the story may tire us,
First graven on symbols of stone,
Re-written on scrolls of papyrus
And parchment, and scattered and blown
By the winds of the tongues of all nations
Like a litter of leaves wildly whirled
Down the rack of a hundred translations
From the earliest lisp of the world."*

RILEY.

LET us turn to another criterion which helps to measure the popularity and importance of books. We can estimate the influence of an author, to some extent at least, by the number of languages into which his writings have been translated. For each version in a fresh form of speech opens the door to a new race of readers, and correspondingly widens the constituency to which a book can appeal. It will be worth while, therefore, if we try to reckon up how many different versions have been published of some of the masterpieces of human literature.

Take the imperishable poems commonly ascribed to Homer, poems which are sometimes styled "the Bible of the Athenians." Scholars have rendered the *Iliad* or the *Odyssey* into more than a score of languages current in modern Europe. But these versions of Homer are made merely for the use of

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students of literature : not with any idea of winning new worshippers for the gods of Olympus.

Take Shakespeare, the prince of English poets, who to-day is being read and acted more extensively than ever he was. In the British Museum, or in the Shakespeare Memorial Library at Birmingham, we may find editions of one or other of his dramas translated into thirty-three different languages, including Icelandic and Japanese.

Take, again, that singular Russian genius who has probably exerted a wider influence over the world's thought than any other living writer. Books by Count Tolstoy have already been published in as many as thirty-three modern tongues.

Take the Puritan tinker whose dream Coleridge pronounced to be "incomparably the best *Summa Theologiæ Evangelicæ* ever produced by a writer not miraculously inspired." For more than two centuries John Bunyan has served as the beloved interpreter of their religion to the English-speaking race. *The Pilgrim's Progress* is now translated into no fewer than a hundred and eleven languages and dialects, which are current in nearly every country on earth from Lapland to Fiji.

Five Hundred and Thirty Versions.

Yet, if we add together all these versions—of Homer and Shakespeare and Tolstoy and Bunyan—they amount to fewer than half the versions of the many-languaged Bible. By means of the translator, working in partnership with the printer, God's Book is being made the common property of mankind. The Gospel has been actually published in over five hundred and thirty different forms of human speech.

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We may put it in another way, and say that at least some book or books of Holy Scripture can be had in the vernaculars spoken by seven-tenths of the population of the world. The Bible lies open, more or less completely, to seven persons out of every ten who are alive to-day.

Chief among the varied agencies which have brought about this result stands the British and Foreign Bible Society, which has helped to translate or to circulate the Scriptures in 424 different tongues. The Society's list of versions now includes the complete Bible in 105 languages, the complete New Testament in 103 more languages, and some book or books of Scripture in 216 other languages besides. To this ever-lengthening list thirty-four new languages have been added during the last five years, most of them having been reduced to writing for the first time in order that they might become vehicles of the Gospel.

Six New Languages.

During the past year the Society has published versions of the Gospel in six new languages, all of which were reduced to written form expressly for this purpose. For three of these new versions we are indebted to Continental scholars, while the other three have been contributed by English missionaries. Thus the Society remains true to its title—Foreign as well as British.

St. Matthew has been printed in *Ongom*, the speech of a powerful Bantu tribe inhabiting the basin of the Gabun River in French Congo. This version is due to an agent of the French Société des Missions évangéliques.

Two Gospels—St. Matthew and St. John—have been issued

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in *Namau*, which is current in the district of that name on the south coast of British New Guinea. Here the London Missionary Society has supplied a translator of these Gospels in the person of the Rev. J. H. Holmes. His station, *Urika*, is a delta village lying among a network of creeks, swamps, and rivers which discharge their waters into the Gulf of Papua. The surrounding district contains 40,000 cannibals, all speaking *Namau*.

The island of New Caledonia, shaped like a gigantic torpedo 240 miles long, lies nearly midway between Queensland and Fiji. For the last half-century it has been used as a French convict-settlement, and thither many of the Paris communards of 1871 were deported. On the east coast of the island are found the *Houailou* and *Ponérihouen* tribes, not free from cannibalism, whose religion appears to consist mainly in an intricate and thorough-going system of taboos relating to persons as well as inanimate things. A vivid description of the natives of New Caledonia is given in a work entitled *La Grande Terre*, by Pastor Maurice Leenhardt, a French Protestant missionary of the Société des Missions évangéliques, who has also translated certain Gospels into *Houailou* and *Ponérihouen*. In the former language the Bible Society has printed St. Mark and St. John, and in the latter St. Mark.

Two other fresh versions have been issued by our Society in co-operation with the Melanesian Mission. *Fiu*, in which St. Matthew's Gospel has been printed, is a dialect current in *Mwala*, one of the densely-wooded Solomon Islands, where the annual rainfall is five times as great as in England. Other dialects spoken on the same island are *Saa*, in which the Bible Society has already published the four Gospels and Acts, and *Lau*, which appeared on the Society's list in 1909, when St. Matthew was issued in that tongue.

The New Hebrides are a chain of islands, partly coralline and partly volcanic, which stretch for 500 miles along the South Pacific, peopled by tribes of Papuan descent with an astonishing variety of languages, in twenty-five of which our Society had already published versions of the Scriptures. *Raga* is spoken on Pentecost, or Whitsuntide Island, where St. Luke's Gospel has now been printed by the Melanesian Mission, the Bible Society bearing the cost.



Photo by

A FIU MAN OF MWALA, SOLOMON ISLANDS.
By Kind Permission of the Melanesian Mission.

Beattie, Hobart.

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The Confusion of Tongues.

Consider briefly how much this result involves and implies. It has been said that of all the buildings ever erected the Tower of Babel casts the longest shadow. We live upon a strangely polyglot planet, whose inhabitants are set asunder by the bewildering confusion of races and tongues.

Here, for example, is a recent picture of the city of Tiflis :* "Sixty-two distinct languages, say the ethnologists, are spoken in its streets ; it holds heaven knows how many groups of separate nationalities, Eastern and semi-Eastern, all determined never to mingle. . . . For Tiflis lies, of course, at the cross-roads of a very important and curious part of the world. Midway between the Black Sea and the Caspian it has received a sloughed-off portion of many Eastern tribes moving west, far too vital ever to change or mingle ; and it lies also at the foot of the only practicable route where Russia and Asia can shake hands across the enormous mountains of the Caucasus. . . .

"So confusing is the human kaleidoscope that one wonders how the people themselves keep separate and disentangled and know without considerable reflection which is their own language. In less than two minutes you pass a Persian with his high cap of smooth lambs' wool, a Mullah with flowing robes down to the ground and turban green or white, a veiled Tatar woman, a keen-eyed Armenian in modern dress, a Russian in uniform, specimens of various mountain tribes with long knives in their belts, Cossack soldiers leading their horses to bathe in the Koura, Kurds dark and malignant of face, Turkish gipsies, other types from Daghestan and further east beyond the Caspian, slant-eyed, dressed in coloured rags, and belonging to no tribe or nation one can name—and through them all, useless, lazy, unreliable, the ubiquitous, long-nosed Georgians with their splendid clothes and their passion for their own wine."

* At Tiflis the Bible Society has a depôt, which is the headquarters of its colporteurs and book-hawkers who carry the Scriptures in dozens of versions from the Black Sea eastwards beyond Bokhara and Samarcand to Tashkent.

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Now, if the Bible is to come home to all nations and kindreds and tribes, it must become naturalized in each country, it must learn to speak its message to every man in his own tongue in which he was born. The missionary conquest of the world involves an immense task in the mere translation of the Scriptures. Many persons imagine that translating is not so very difficult after all. We recollect, perhaps, our own youthful attempts at Greek and Latin composition; but those efforts lie so far behind us that we forget what pains they cost and what sort of results they produced. Exact and idiomatic translation is never easy. In the pages of *Punch* we used to find parodies of the grotesque fashion in which educated Hindus misapply English phrases and idioms. But if Horace and Sophocles could come back and read the classical exercises which win prizes at a modern university, they might chuckle over our "babu" Latin and Greek.

In truth, this problem of translating out of one language into another is choked with thorny difficulties. "Translation," said Dryden, "is a kind of drawing from the life; where every one will acknowledge that there is a double sort of likeness, a good one and a bad. It is one thing to draw the outlines true, the features like, the proportions exact, the colouring itself perhaps tolerable; and another thing to make all these graceful by the posture, the shadowings, and chiefly by the spirit which animates the whole."

The Task of a Translator.

M. Maurice Maeterlinck, who has himself rendered *Macbeth* into French, speaks feelingly about the inherent difficulties of such a task.

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"Translators face to face with Shakespeare are like painters seated in front of the same landscape. Each will make a different picture ; and for this reason, that around the literal sense of the words there floats a secret life which is all but impossible to catch, and which is, nevertheless, more important than the external life of the words and of the images."

This may seem fanciful to those who do not understand what is the real difference between poetry and prose ; but a little experiment will show that it is true. Let them try to translate a sentence like *Trespassers will be prosecuted*, or *Keep to the left*, into a foreign language, and they will find it easy enough. Let them attempt a line like *After life's fitful fever he sleeps well*, and, if they have any sense of the difference between poetry and prose, they are not likely to be satisfied with their attempt. In the first case the literal sense of the words is all that they possess. In the second, it is only a small part of what they signify. They have also a power over the mind which is like the power of music, or of the voice and gestures of a great orator ; and this is what the translator cannot communicate to his version, because he cannot analyze it, and has no command of the process by which Shakespeare charged his words with it. This power is the power of emotion, and translation becomes difficult always in proportion to the amount of emotion that is successfully expressed in the original. The logical meaning of words can be exactly understood ; their emotional power cannot. Indeed, like the emotional power of a landscape, it varies with the nature of the recipient, and thus M. Maeterlinck is right when he says that versions of the same poem may vary as much as pictures of the same landscape.

There is no such thing as an exact translation of a great poem, because no two men ever have exactly the same emotions. However sensitive a translator may be, and however accomplished, the emotion aroused in him by the poem which he translates will not be the same as the emotion expressed in the original, because he is not the same man nor in the same circumstances as the original poet. The translator must be inspired by his original, as a painter may be inspired by a real scene ; and in each case there will be as many different versions, none of them exactly like the original, as there are translators or painters. It might therefore be supposed that a translator

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need not aim at any kind of fidelity ; but M. Maeterlinck insists upon the importance of fidelity and tells us how exacting is the ideal of the conscientious translator. And no doubt he is right, for the translator's loyalty to his original is like the painter's loyalty to nature. Each knows that an exact imitation is impossible, but each reverences the source of his inspiration too much to misrepresent it ; and without this reverence there can be no sincerity or precision or richness in either art.

Our English Bible.

It is significant that the finest translation in the world is the English Authorised Version of the Scriptures. That may not be an exact translation, but it is the result and culmination of a series of attempts to make one. All the translators tried, not to produce a pretty piece of literature on their own account, but to render into English words which they believed to be inspired. This belief of theirs aroused in them a high religious emotion, which, half unconsciously perhaps, they expressed in their different versions ; and, since they all shared in this emotion, each of them was able to make use of the labours of his predecessors and to some extent to improve upon them. Thus the Authorised Version expresses the religious emotions of the English people as they were inspired by the original, and all the translators had this in common, that they were as faithful as they could be to the original. They differed in detail according to the difference in the mind of each ; but their common fidelity gave them a cumulative power, the result of which was the richness and precision and sincerity of the Authorised Version.*

Pioneer Versions.

It is hardly possible for us to imagine what it costs to translate the Scriptures for the first time into the tongue of some barbarous tribe which possesses no alphabet, no vocabulary, no grammar. When Henry Nott, the predecessor and companion of John

* Quoted from a communication by its Paris correspondent in *The Times* of September 1, 1909.

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Williams in the South Seas, had spent twenty years in Tahiti so that he might perfect himself in its language, he then proceeded to spend twenty years more in order that he might render the Bible into Tahitian. We do not sufficiently recognize the heroic drudgery of the noble army of translators, who toil on with untiring patience to give men of all races the Gospel in their native speech. The difficulties are enormous, the labour is almost inconceivable, the initial mistakes are not seldom astonishing and amusing also. Imagine the translator in New Guinea who wanted the proper idiom for "far be it from me to do this thing." He consulted an intelligent catechumen and explained the idea to be conveyed. "Yes," replied the catechumen, "I understand exactly. We have the precise idiom: we say, 'May I speak to my mother-in-law before I will do this thing!'" For in that land of strange taboos one of the unpardonable sins is for a man to open his lips to his wife's mother.

Some Linguistic Difficulties:

How can you find a name for "lamb" among the inhabitants of some island where the only quadrupeds are pigs and rats? How can you render "whiter than snow" in the dialects of West Africa, where snow is utterly unknown? How can you translate "harp, sackbut, psaltery, dulcimer, and all kinds of music" in the language of the Siberian Samoyedes, whose sole notion of music is the sorcerer's drum?

Some of the most uncouth languages indulge in curiously elaborate inflexions. St. Mark's Gospel

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is published by the Bible Society in Lengua, the speech of an Indian tribe in Paraguay. Eight hundred inflexions is quite a moderate number for a regular verb in Lengua. Many words, however, are of enormous length. The word for eighteen is "Sohog-emek-wakthla-mok-eminik-antanthlama." Literally translated, that means, "Finished my hands, pass to my other foot—three," for fingers and toes serve as units. The word for butter in Lengua is "Waitkyanamankukingminik-ikpithmuk" — which means, literally, "the grease of the juice of the udder of the cow."

The translator of the Gospels into Hwa Miao, which have just been published by the Bible Society for an aboriginal tribe in Western China, found great difficulties in obtaining any equivalents for certain terms. He could get no rendering for "the Comforter" in St. John xiv., in spite of repeated inquiries, until at last his Hwa Miao teacher came to say that "he must be absent for a day, as a friend had lost her child and he was going to *console* her": the word which he employed meant, literally, "to bring her round a corner."

The Moral Problem.

But the translator's worst difficulty of all is the moral difficulty. Here is one instance of it, from the experience of a gifted linguist who encamped for some time among an Indian hill-tribe, and set out to translate the Parable of the Prodigal Son into their speech. But he discovered that their only notion of feasting was to get intoxicated on native beer. Their only word for festival meant "much beer-drinking." So when he tried to render the phrase in the parable,

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"they began to be merry," he had the utmost difficulty in finding any word for rejoicing which did not also suggest drunkenness. Such an experience illuminates the real problem. Not only the heathen, but the speech of the heathen, must be Christianized. Their language itself needs to be born again. Their very words have to be converted from foul meanings and base uses and baptized into a Christian sense, before those words can convey the great truths and ideas of the Bible.

Very broken and imperfect to begin with must be the first version of the Gospel in a barbarous tongue. And yet with all its defects and shortcomings, each of these versions—even the earliest and the crudest—becomes a means of grace. "It tells me my heart," confessed the negro in the West Indies. "It makes men new," cried the Bechuana in South Africa. So out of the mouths of savages comes testimony to the wonderful Word of God.

The Work of the Reviser.

The task of Bible-revision, as well as Bible-translation, is going on continually. At this present time nearly a hundred different versions are being made or improved or completed in various parts of the world. The work is carried on by missionaries and scholars and linguists, generally organized in committees under the Bible Society's auspices, and often at its expense. The last revision of the Lifu Old Testament involved above 40,000 corrections. The Bible Society expended over £3,000 on revising the Malagasy Bible, and £3,500 on revising the Hindi Old Testament—in both cases apart from all cost of printing and publication. But no pains and no

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expense are wasted which enable God's Book to speak as clearly and simply and sweetly as possible to each man in his own tongue.

Besides providing the Scriptures in every language, the Bible Society aims at one accepted version in each language. By its experience and its resources it has influence and authority to unite the most competent scholars at this sacred task, and so to provide for each heathen land a practically authorised version. It is no small gain to escape sectarian translations made by separate Missions. Whatever else divides Christian missionaries abroad, at least they should appeal to one and the same copy of the Bible.

The Redemption of a Language.

Such work has plainly a high scientific interest and value. From one point of view the Bible Society is a great philological institute. It has crystallized and created scores of languages, which, until then, had no alphabet in existence. It has taken many a corrupt and degraded dialect and purified its forms and phrases, so that the poor miserable jargon has become clothed and in its right mind—transformed, like the demoniac of old, into a messenger of redeeming Love.

Even in a faulty translation, with many inadequate terms, the Word of God is far more pure and holy than anything else in the speech of a heathen tribe. The Rev. A. W. Banfield, who has translated the Nupé Gospels for a race on the Upper Niger, tells us that the natives themselves have often said to him: "You take our words and so change them that we hardly recognize them again." . . . "We never

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thought that you could say such pure things with our language."

Scholars admit the immense influence which has been exercised by the English and the German versions of the Bible upon the languages of England and Germany. But even the lowest and most sordid forms of speech can be transfigured as they learn gradually to express Christian ideas. Though they have lain among the pots, yet they become as the wings of a dove covered with silver and her feathers with yellow gold.

"The home-speech of the mouth of God."

It is one chief concern of the Bible Society that in each country the Scriptures shall be rendered not into a formal literary style, suitable for scholars and courtiers, but into the "vulgar tongue" which common men understand in the market-place, which mothers use with their children in the cottage. There are not a few countries where alongside of a scholarly standard translation of the Bible it has been found necessary to provide colloquial versions as well. In China, for example, besides the Bible in Wênli, the literary language dear to all educated Chinese, and the Bible in Mandarin, the most widely current vernacular, our Society has published the Scriptures, or some part of them, in fifteen other colloquial dialects of Chinese, each spoken by millions of people. To meet the needs of fifty thousand Malay-speaking Chinese in the Straits Settlements, the New Testament is being rendered into their special form of the language, known as "Baba" Malay. For educated Arabs no finer version can be desired than the Arabic Bible translated by Dr. Cornelius Van

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Dyck. But our Society has been constrained also to publish Gospels in the local varieties of Arabic current in Morocco, Tunis, and Algeria.

Last year the natives of Algeria gave an enthusiastic welcome to the new version of St. Luke's Gospel in their own colloquial Arabic. Nearly 6,500 copies were circulated—more than half of which the colporteurs sold, copy by copy. They carried this Gospel from north to south and from east to west of Algeria, finding eager purchasers everywhere. Many Arabs kissed the book reverently before putting it into their pockets. One colporteur's approach to the towns on his route was heralded by a crowd who announced the coming of the man "who sells the Gospel in our own language." On his arrival he was surrounded by purchasers who pressed their money into one of his hands, and eagerly snatched the books out of the other.

Recent Progress.

Year in and year out companies of scholars and linguists are carrying on quiet, persistent labour in many lands where versions are being completed or made more perfect. Now and again we gather the slow-ripening fruit of their toil. Thus, for the subjects of the Emperor Menelik a complete New Testament has at last been published in Tigrinya, a Semitic language spoken by 3,000,000 people in the Tigré province of Abyssinia. Careful revisions are going forward in no fewer than fourteen of the greater languages of the world. Of these, the awakening East fitly claims the major part. In India the Bible is being carefully revised in Marathi, and in Kanarese. Still further eastwards, the revision of the Japanese Bible has been actually taken in hand; in China the revision both of the Wênli and Mandarin versions makes steady progress; while the Korean Bible rapidly approaches completion. Every year native



Photo by

A MOORISH COUNTRY WOMAN.

A. Cavilla

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scholars take a larger share in the task of translating and revising the Scriptures.

Among reference Bibles published for the first time during the year we may mention the revised edition of Segond's version—which is the only modern reference Bible in French. The Urdu New Testament has been issued with references, and a corresponding edition of the Urdu Old Testament is in the press.

In Central South Africa the various Missions have long used several different systems of spelling. But a recent Conference in Johannesburg, held at the instance of the Bible Society, has happily agreed on a uniform orthography for Chuana and Pedi, two of the current vernaculars.

At home, Dr. Ginsburg's new edition of the Hebrew Bible goes steadily forward; the Book of Isaiah has appeared in the form in which the whole will be finally published and has received an enthusiastic welcome from Semitic scholars both in this country and on the Continent.

With the friendly consent of the Oxford University Press, Dr. H. Julian White has undertaken to edit for our Society a pocket edition of the Latin New Testament, presenting the text of the great critical edition of the Vulgate on which he has long been engaged with the Bishop of Salisbury.

In Braille type for the blind, new books of the Bible were completed last year in Welsh, Spanish, Italian, Gujarati and two forms of colloquial Chinese. The re-issue of the English Bible in revised Braille has now been completed. The Bible Society has helped to provide the Scriptures in embossed type for the blind in thirty-one different versions. From the Sudan our depôt-keeper wrote last year: "A

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blind sheikh wishes to have the Bible in raised type; please send as many of the separate books of the Bible as are to be had." Two cases of bulky volumes of the Arabic Scriptures in Moon type for the blind were accordingly packed and dispatched from Alexandria to the Society's depôt at Khartum.

For Missions in Many Lands.

The services rendered by the Bible Society to missionary organizations are vital and manifold.

In almost all the chief mission fields—as, for instance, in China and India, in Uganda and South Africa—the Bible Society maintains its own representative, whose functions include not a few important and difficult duties. He has to organize the representative committees which undertake the task of translation or revision in local vernaculars. He must arrange for printing and producing such new editions of the Scriptures in different languages and characters as shall meet the popular needs, alike in quantity, size, and *format*. He has generally to engage, supervise, visit and encourage the colporteurs maintained by the Bible Society in his agency. He has to correspond with all the missions at work there, and to arrange that they shall be duly supplied with the editions of the Scriptures which they need from the Society's local depôts. Generally, also, he has to decide, in consultation with representative missionaries, at what prices editions shall be sold.

These selling-prices are fixed according to one controlling principle of the Bible Society's mission. Far from doing business at a profit, it habitually sells its popular editions at prices which involve

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serious loss. Those prices are fixed in any country, not by considering how much books have cost to produce and distribute, but by considering what the poorest class of labourers in that country can afford to pay.

Missionary organizations obtain their supplies of printed Scriptures at a further discount off the catalogue price which is charged to an ordinary purchaser. Thus, there is a margin between what a missionary has to pay for Scriptures and what he may receive for the re-sale of them; this margin covers the cost of copies which he may wish to give away. In all cases the Bible Society pays the carriage of the books, so that there is no increase of cost to some remote mission station above the price charged at one of the Society's depôts.

The services which have been thus roughly defined, constitute what is by far the greatest contribution of the Bible Society to Christian missions abroad. There remains a minor function of the Society, which, however, is only supplementary.

In places where the Bible Society has no representative of its own—as, for instance, in many parts of Africa, and in the South Seas—grants are made on “missionary terms.” This means that the Society defrays the whole cost of production and freight, and sends the books out free of charge. It leaves the missionary to fix the prices of sale, to repay himself local expenses from such proceeds, and to remit any ultimate balance to the Bible House.

During the past year over 7,000 copies of the Scriptures in the Ibo and Hausa languages were sent out from London on “missionary terms” to

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stations of the C.M.S. in Nigeria; the cost of these books, apart from freight, was £747.

We may give another example to illustrate the services which the Bible Society constantly render to the missionary. Last year the following missions drew supplies of the Scriptures from the Bible Society's depôts within the boundaries of its Egyptian Agency:

The Church Missionary Society, the North Africa Mission, the United Free Church of Scotland Mission, the American Presbyterian Mission, the Reformed Presbyterian Mission, the Irish and Scotch Reformed Presbyterian Mission, the Swedish Evangelical Mission, the London Jews' Society, the British Syrian Mission, the Irish Presbyterian Mission, the Mission of the English Presbyterian Church to the Jews, the Church of Scotland Jewish Mission and Schools, the Waldensian Mission, the Dutch Presbyterian Mission, the Egypt General Mission, the United Methodist Free Church Mission, the Friends' Foreign Missionary Association, the Friends' Africa Industrial Mission, the Universities' Mission to Central Africa.

* * * * *

What we have called the test of translation as applied to the Bible surely yields astonishing results. What can be more impressive than the fact that this Book alone among all others is made readable for men of every colour and in every country? Can there be more convincing proof that it alone is the Book of humanity? Other religions indeed, including those which proselytize, possess holy books of their own. But, as Professor Warneck points out, these are not spread abroad at all in foreign languages, they have done little missionary service—none at all, indeed, in the comprehensive manner of the Bible. Moslems are forbidden to translate the

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Koran from its original Arabic into any "profane" tongue. There are indeed a few early versions of the scriptures of Buddhism, and some versions or adaptations of certain sacred Sanskrit writings of Hinduism. But in modern times the translations of non-Christian sacred books have been made by European scholars for scientific purposes. None of them professes to be a universal and œcumenical book. Only the Bible is the Book of the whole human race. All the world over Christians differing in blood and speech discover their unity in its pages. The Holy Spirit has submitted to the limitation of language so that in every tongue the Gospel of redeeming Love may be magnified. And God's manifold wisdom will only be interpreted in all its fulness when the Divine thoughts are uttered through the characteristic words and forms of all languages.

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THE TEST OF UBIQUITY.

"To His kingdom there shall be no frontier."

Reading of Isaiah viii. 7

in a recently discovered Syriac MS.

ON the site of Troy German excavators have found the remains of no fewer than six ancient cities, one above another. The sixth of these we may roughly identify with the Troy of Greek legend, immortalized by Homer. But as far back as 2000 B.C. there was standing on the same site an earlier city, the second of the series. And among the remains of this second city there has been discovered a weapon of nephrite, or jade, a rare stone not found anywhere nearer than China, and testifying to the distances which trade could travel in prehistoric times.*

That fragment of jade—carried across Asia from the land of Sinim to be buried on the shore of the Levant—will serve for a parable of the extraordinary dispersion of Holy Scripture. God's Book is become the most ubiquitous book in the world. It marches ahead of the pioneers of civilization, it penetrates in front of the newspaper correspondent. The first European traveller in modern days to enter Merv was O'Donovan, the dashing correspondent of the *Daily*

* Cf. Gilbert Murray, *The Rise of the Greek Epic*.

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Photo from life

THE DEPOSED DALAI LAMA OF TIBET.

By The Graphic

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News. But when he rode into the city he found that the Scriptures had preceded him. From a Jewish merchant in Merv he purchased a copy of St. Matthew's Gospel, published by the Bible Society in 1880 in Jaghatai Tatar, the dialect of the Tekké Turkomans. Years before the first nugget of gold was discovered in the Klondyke, the Bible Society was printing the New Testament in Tukudh, for the Indian hunters of the Yukon valley. Years before the British expedition entered Tibet, the Bible Society had published the New Testament in Tibetan, and Gospels and Testaments were carried over the snowy Himalayan passes, so that our soldiers came upon well-worn copies of these books when they reached Lhasa, the Forbidden City.

In Closed Countries.

The Scriptures can find a way through doors which are fast barred against all other Christian influences. They enter and bear their testimony where no living voice may proclaim the Gospel. The ancient realm of Abyssinia excludes missionaries, but Testaments in Ethiopic and Amharic and Gospels in the vernaculars of the tribesmen have been percolating for many years into the dominions of Menelik. No Christian teachers are admitted into Afghanistan or Nepal; but native traders take the Nepalese Testament across their frontiers, and caravans over the Khyber carry Pashtu Bibles to Kandahar and Kabul. Our reports show how often the printed Gospel proves itself an effectual evangelist. It can win its own welcome and deliver its mighty message even apart from human aid. For to lonely souls the Holy Spirit of God is His own interpreter.

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The Society's Depôts.

In order that God's Book may be brought within reach of His children far and near, the Bible Society has established depôts in nearly a hundred of the principal cities of the world. Of the books which it issues, two-thirds are produced in foreign countries for foreign readers. Part of the Society's Centenary Fund is being systematically devoted to securing new sites, depôts, or other premises, at important centres of population. The Society now possesses a widely-spread network of Bible Houses in most of its Agencies abroad. Recently larger or more suitable depôts have been built, or acquired, or opened, in cities as widely apart as Barcelona, Bombay, Colombo, Khartum, Port Said, Rangoon, and Singapore. It is also proposed to secure new headquarters for the Society's work at Alexandria, the commercial capital of the Nile valley, and at Buenos Ayres, which ranks second only to Paris as a centre of the Latin peoples.

The Dispersion of Races.

One astonishing phenomenon in human society to-day is the vast silent migration which is everywhere going on. Foreign peoples continually filter into strange lands, and the ends of the earth flow together in bewildering confusion. Last year, for example, more than a quarter of a million immigrants, mainly Spaniards and Italians, entered the Argentine. Canada received 200,000 new-comers, representing fifty-three nationalities; and about one-third of the Scriptures which our Society circulated in the Dominion were in languages other than English. Russian peasants cross the Urals into Siberia at the

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rate of 2,000 a day. In Korea 1,000 Japanese are landing every week. Formerly Trinidad was nominally Christian; but for the last thirty years indentured coolies from the East Indies have been coming into the island, where most of them remain. Fresh coolies arrive at the rate of 2,000 a year, so that to-day this island, named after the Holy Trinity, has a heathen population of 100,000—more than one in three—who build temples to Halûman, the Hindu monkey god.

When we realize this strange flux of races we understand why the Society's depôt at Johannesburg has supplied versions of the Scriptures in seventy-nine different languages and dialects, including Maori and Icelandic. Our depôt at Jerusalem sold the Word of God last year in twenty-five versions. For the same cause Chinese versions are sent to Samoa and to Tahiti, and Malay versions to Cape Town. Syrian traders gladly buy Arabic Testaments in Jamaica, in Chile, in Argentina, and in Brazil. Indian colporteurs are employed among the Indians in Natal and in British Guiana, Chinese colporteurs among the Chinese in Siberia and Korea. To-day, more than ever, the Bible Society must persevere in its world-wide mission to cancel the curse of Babel and to multiply the blessings of Pentecost.

Here are two instances of "outlanders" in Venezuela.

"What do I care for a Bible now?" said a German shopkeeper at Valencia. "I left all that sort of thing behind me in Germany. A Bible does not help a man to make dollars." "Have you only this life to think about?" replied the colporteur. "There is something better than dollars to live for. The Bible teaches a man not only how to make money honestly and how to spend it well, but how to live so that he will receive

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heavenly treasure in another world." The shopkeeper remained silent for a few moments, and then said, "Señor, your words are true. Although I have never read a Bible since I left Germany twenty years ago, I will buy one now and read it again."

At the town of San Joaquin a Jewish trader, who had come from Morocco thirty years before, was delighted to hear that he could buy a Bible. "Read me the story of Joseph," he said to the colporteur, "I have not heard it since my youth. Let me hear a Psalm of David and a chapter from the Prophets." It was a grand opportunity to read him the Scriptures and to show from the Prophets that Jesus Christ was Messiah and King. He listened with rapt attention to the end, and although a Jew he bought the New Testament with the Old, saying, "I will read both."

The Mission of the Colporteur.

To put the Scriptures into the hands of otherwise neglected multitudes of mankind, the Bible Society has developed one characteristic type of agent. The colporteur, with his wallet of cheap little Gospels and Testaments, seeks men out wherever they make their homes, and offers them God's Book in the speech in which they were born. First and foremost, the colporteur must be an earnest-hearted Christian, qualified by his own experience to commend the Book which he carries. As a rule he is also a native of the country where he travels, and so he moves naturally among the people, familiar with their customs and ways of thought and quaint idioms of speech.

Throughout last year the Society employed no fewer than 1,100 of these wayfaring Biblemen, who went about selling the Scriptures at prices which the poorest can afford to pay, and disposed of as many as 2,900,000 copies of the Word of God. These

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men are selected, organized, and superintended with the utmost care by our agents, or not seldom by our missionary friends—who, be it said, themselves take rank among the most zealous and effective of Bible-sellers. The number of colporteurs shows an increase of nearly 200—partly through the generosity of individuals, for as many as 158 Chinese colporteurs are now being personally supported by friends in England. Half of our colporteurs are natives of India or China—the two great empires which contain together about three-sevenths of the human race. Besides these, 100 Korean colporteurs have been busy in their own country. In Europe 225 colporteurs have visited the towns and villages of the Continent, offering the Scriptures from door to door.

The colporteur's vocation lies mainly aloof and apart from great cities. In most countries population is not congested into huge swarming centres of industry. For example, the empire of Austro-Hungary, which embraces forty-two millions of people, contains only six cities which are larger than Norwich. In Russia, nearly a third of the total area still remains forest; and eight Russians out of every nine live in scattered villages, where only colporteurs can effectually carry the Scriptures. More than ninety per cent. of the teeming multitudes of India are peasants. When we consider the significance of facts like these, we begin to understand that after we have translated the Scriptures and printed the Scriptures, one vital task remains unfulfilled. This is the work of our Bible-messengers—to use their familiar German name—who carry to these innumerable hamlets

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and wayside cottages and lonely huts and homesteads the Gospel in each man's mother-tongue.

Autolycus the Evangelist.

Be it remembered, moreover, that the colporteur is a genuine evangelist. He is chosen not merely for his cleverness as a shrewd hawker, but because he has learnt to know and love the Bible. Its power dwells in his heart, and its message lives on his lips; and when he sells a Gospel he can add his warm, personal word of witness to the Redeemer whom it proclaims. At the same time it is no part of the colporteur's duty to make proselytes, or to detach adherents from any Christian communion. He has explicit instructions that he shall, as far as possible, avoid controversy. And the peace of God follows him as he wanders, and abides with him where he enters in.

In Perils Oft.

The experiences of these Biblemen are not free from hardship and peril. Last year in Galicia one was arrested and imprisoned for eleven days as a Russian spy. Another spent three weeks in prison in Honduras. Another had to beat a hasty retreat from bullets in the streets when revolution broke out at Lima. Another suffered violent assault in a village of the Nile Delta. Another was pelted and plundered in Burma. Another was nearly drowned in a flooded river in Salvador. Another suffered shipwreck on a coral reef off the coast of Yucatan. Another was beaten by a crowd of young students, who tore his books to pieces, at Lahore; but when it was proposed to transfer him to a safer station his



QUICHÉ INDIANS IN GUATEMALA.

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reply was, "No, I am not afraid : God will take care of me." Such is the spirit in which these humble, faithful, heroic Bible-sellers are making God's Book the most ubiquitous book in the world.

The Burden of the Colporteur.

"Few white men know, fewer perhaps regard, the circumstances under which colportage is carried on in the tropical island of Java. Our colporteurs need sympathy and encouragement, as they bear the heat and burden of the day and the discomforts of the night. There is little home-life for them. More often than not a wayside lodging-place of questionable repute is the only place where they can sleep. Far from home and friends, often denied the opportunities of gathering with Christians, more open to malaria than most men because of their irregular nomadic lives, tramping through the island in sun or rain, along its fever-haunted coasts, through humid rice-swamps or dense teak-forests, among the buyers and sellers of the crowded market-place, canvassing the huts of tiny hamlets or journeying up and down the slopes of Java's fiery volcanoes—anywhere, everywhere, so that men may receive the Book of Life, they bear lightly the things that affect the body, but are often saddened by indifference, opposition, and the apparent thanklessness of their work. How they contrive to clothe themselves decently, send their children to school, and pay their way generally on the small salaries they receive, it is difficult to understand : yet one seldom meets with complaint. Poor in this world's goods, yet are they rich in eternal treasure that no chance or change can take from them."

In Brazil one of our colporteurs closed his December letter last year thus : "I am very content in my work. I have opportunity to speak with all classes of people about the love of God. No one is happier than I am, because of this privilege of winning souls for Christ. I do not trust in myself, but in Him who sends me."

In Ceylon some one asked a Sinhalese colporteur,

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“How is it that you are always so happy, for I very well know the difficulties in your work and the burdens you have to bear, and still you keep smiling?” In reply the colporteur opened a Bible and pointed to Psalm lv. 22: “Cast thy burden upon the Lord.”

At the end of a journey among the Andes, during which he sold 1,500 copies of the Scriptures, Colporteur Valenzuela writes: “My pen has no skill to explain to you on paper the way God has blessed His Word. If I were to tell you all, ten thousand words would not be enough.”

Beginning at Jerusalem.

One colporteur in Colombo belongs to a respectable Sinhalese family, whose members are all influential Buddhists. Since he embraced the Christian faith he has gone through much persecution, his own relations practically disinheriting him. He writes thus concerning his first month's work:

“When I took up work for the Bible Society, the first house I went to with Bibles to sell was my father's. There, in the presence of my parents and my seven brothers, I requested them to buy a copy of the Holy Scriptures, the book which so marvellously changes a man's life, if only he accepts its teaching and lives it. One of my brothers said, ‘There are eight brothers in our family including yourself; you are the only one who is a Christian. You say that you serve an all-loving and all-powerful God. If that be so, how is it you are undergoing all sorts of privations? Look at us; none of us are in want; we have all that we need. But you are not so, and the great secret of this is that you have left our religion and are serving another God. Therefore we do not want your Bibles. You can do whatever you please with them; we can get on as we have done up till now without them.’ However, I am extremely thankful to say that by the grace of God I broke

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down all their arguments, and in the end *the first copy of the Holy Scriptures sold by me was to my own family*. I told them it was quite true that from a worldly point of view they might be getting on far better than I; but I enjoyed many blessings which they did not possess. I read them the parable of Dives and Lazarus, to which they, especially my dear old mother, carefully listened. It was that which chiefly broke down their arguments, and led them to buy a copy of the Bible."

He further states that he has been in the habit of visiting his family periodically, "to give instruction about the Gospel of Christ. Occasionally some give ear to my words, and others mock me, saying I am mad. But my dear mother has at last found the truth of the Christian religion, and I am praying continually that more and more her heart, and that of the others, may be opened fully to the salvation offered by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ."

Hic et ubique.

These Biblemen penetrate to the most odd and unexpected places. We hear of them last year selling the Scriptures under the shadow of Dante's tomb at Ravenna; among rubber-gatherers in the valley of the Amazon; in restaurants at Paris, and in *cafés* at Cairo, and in gambling-dens at Johore; among lonely settlers in Queensland; along the new Hejas railway line which is creeping from Damascus down towards the holy cities of Islam. Last year a colporteur for the first time visited Nova Zemla, and distributed Testaments among the Samoyedes on that desolate island in the Arctic Ocean. Another colporteur carried the Scriptures for the first time to Buddhist monasteries beside the turquoise-blue waters of the sacred Lake Mansarowar in Tibet.

The colporteur travels in all manner of ways—by train or steamer or sledge; on horse-back or mule-

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back ; oftenest of all on foot. In French Indo-China he is conveyed by native boat, or in a bullock-cart, or even on an elephant. In Natal he drives a waggon with a pair of mules. In Mongolia he crosses the great deserts with a caravan of ponies and camels. Last summer one agent floated down the Tigris from Diarbekir to Mosul, the site of ancient Nineveh, on a raft constructed of goat-skins, inflated with air and fastened on to a frame of timber—almost exactly like the rafts shown in bas-relief on the Assyrian monuments in the British Museum.

Across the Hills on Foot.

Two colporteurs tramped from Santiago to Valparaiso, over 100 miles, to call at the little villages and farmhouses along the route. Such a journey across rough mountainous country, under a broiling Chilian sun and laden with heavy packages of books, was no light task. On their second day they arrived at a solitary hut at the foot of a hill. Here they found a farm-labourer and his wife, who had never attended a Gospel service of any kind, nor ever conversed with a Protestant minister ; but they had been led to Christ by reading a Bible brought by a Christian friend from a neighbouring town, and by the few explanations which he had given them. When our colporteurs presented themselves at the door of this *rancho* and announced that they sold the Bible, the woman replied, "We have a Bible already, brothers, but won't you come in and rest yourselves?" She proceeded to press upon them that generous hospitality for which country-folk in Chile are proverbial. Thus, in the most unlikely places, we find those who by means of the Bible have learnt to know their Redeemer and to recognize the brotherhood of those who believe in Him.

Before dawn on the fifth day the colporteurs arrived at Valparaiso, weary and footsore, but glad at heart, for they had sold more than 150 books, for the most part in homes which before had been in ignorance of the existence of a written revelation from God to man. Was not the fatigue worth while?

At Vladivostock.

On the Pacific coast of Siberia Colporteur Tchebikin works among the Russian soldiers, who are quartered there in such numbers that the maritime province seems one vast military camp. Tchebikin has proved himself to be a thoroughly capable man; by admirable patience and tact he has succeeded where others have failed. The notes, permits, and passes which he has received from different regimental authorities would make up quite a ream of writing paper. At the end of last year a special permit was issued to him to visit the "Russian Island," which lies due south of Vladivostock, and forms a sort of Kronstadt to the "Citadel of the East." This rare privilege enables Tchebikin to visit all forts and garrisons, not excluding the "Russian Island," until September 29, 1910. It will give our colporteur great opportunities to distribute God's Word among the various garrisons, and it constitutes a very remarkable proof of the authorities' confidence in the Bible Society and in its servants.

In Burma.

Last year in Burma nearly 8,000 villages and over 130,000 houses were visited by the colporteurs, who sold 53,000 books.

In most cases the books are sold copy by copy, after much patient, earnest persuasion on the part of the colporteur and many objections, doubts, and hesitations on the part of the purchaser. Fifty, a hundred, two hundred houses will be visited in the course of a day, and the sales may not amount to a dozen. But then from time to time, in the cool of the evening, perhaps even after darkness has set in, the colporteur is cheered by the arrival of some Nicodemus-like

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enquirer, who will sit and discuss "religion"—and there is nothing the thoughtful Oriental likes better—until a scoffer by daylight goes quietly home with his mind full of new ideas and a small book in his hand more precious than all the rubies of Burma.

In Korea.

A Presbyterian missionary sends the following description of a Korean colporteur whom he supervises :

"Colporteur Chung Soo Wun is referred to by our Korean Christians as a striking example of what an ignorant man, filled by the Spirit, can do to advance the cause of Christ. Accustomed to hard work from his early years, he is not ashamed to be seen carrying a heavy load of books on his back. He presses the sale of the Scriptures, and gives his simple testimony with an earnestness difficult to resist, and wins a respectful hearing when he tells what the Gospel has done for himself. He believes that the Gospel is intended for all classes, and consequently he is to be seen with his books not only in the streets, in the market-places and *sarangs* of the common people, but at times in Buddhist temples also, where, despite difficulties, he succeeds in finding listeners and occasionally a purchaser. A priest, attached to one of these temples, heard the colporteur's message, bought a book, and became so interested that he is now a sincere and earnest enquirer. Nor are the small islands lying off the coast neglected by our brother. From one of the most distant of these—which took him twenty-four hours to reach by native boat, and had never been visited by any missionary—he lately brought the welcome news that, mainly as the result of reading some portions of Scripture purchased by the islanders, an interest had been aroused that had resulted in over forty believers."

In Bosnia.

Colporteur Lakacs went into a market-place in Bosnia on one of the festival days of the Greek Orthodox Church, which the country-folk were

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celebrating with music and dancing. Some of the young men bought Testaments as presents for their partners in the dances, and the village priest recommended the colporteur's books.

Wayside Apologists.

From the Chinese province of Shantung the Rev. C. J. Voskamp, of the Berlin Mission at Tsingtan, writes :

“When I go out with the colporteurs, I am mostly a silent listener, or I give a friendly nod to my apologist of the Christian faith as he stands in his cow-skin *paletot*.

“‘What! I have a soul, you say?’ cries the wheelbarrowman by the wayside, as he lights his pipe; ‘what curious doctrines are told now-a-days!’ ‘Look at your loaded wheelbarrow; why does it not move by itself, while you are resting here?’ replies the colporteur. ‘It is by the strength of your arm that it is moved. So with your soul; and here is the power’ (showing a Bible) ‘which moves our soul and heart, the power of that eternal love with which God loves the world.’

“‘You are not a Chinese, you do not worship the idols,’ says an old temple-keeper, when invited to buy a book. ‘Which idol?’ is the colporteur's rejoinder. ‘Look at these idols, they are all stamped with a seal.’ ‘O, ye immortal gods!’ cries the colporteur, with a sarcastic smile, ‘are ye indeed made genuine by a stamp?’”

In a *café* at Budapest a young man asserted that the sale of the Bible ought to be forbidden, because it contained objectionable matter. The colporteur replied that God did not make a secret of the sins of mankind, and asked him how a faithful biography of his own life would read.

In Annam some peasants said to the colporteur: “You say we must worship your God. The *bonzes* (Buddhist monks) say we must worship Buddha.

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Which shall we worship?" He replied, "Worship Him who loves you. God so much loved men that He gave them His Son. And He will give them eternal life also. Here are books that will prove to you the truth of my words. Worship Him who loves you." What a simple, profound reply!

Side-lights on many Regions.

From the colporteurs' journals we get strange and vivid glimpses into men's thoughts and lives in distant lands. Even in European countries there exists amazing ignorance and superstition. A Spanish monk at Meira snatched the Gospel from a woman's hand and forbade her to read it, exclaiming, "Jesus did not teach the Gospel in Castilian." Near Kempten, in Bavaria, a workman at a cheese-factory declared: "Your books are Protestant, for it says in them that the Mother of God was married." In the lower valley of the Rhine there are Roman Catholics who, when they look at the title-page of the New Testament, will remark, "New, indeed! No; we will keep to the old one." At Bremen a German-speaking emigrant from Russia, who had bought a copy of Allioli's version of the Bible, brought it back the next day, saying that he was Catholic, not Apostolic: he had read on its title-page that it contained the text "approved by the Apostolic See." At Misleta, in Spain, while a colporteur was speaking about the Prodigal Son, one of the audience interrupted him: "We don't want to hear about the Prodigal Son; he was a Protestant."

From regions more remote and less civilized come curious evidences of the social condition of the

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people. Imagine the state of that province in Persia where, in some villages, the colporteurs were mistaken for spies, and in others for Government officials: in both cases, "as soon as the people saw us at a distance, they left all they had and fled." In Annam the villagers are afraid of our Sub-agent when he arrives for the first time. They think he is a Customs officer, come to see whether they have any opium or brandy, or a French soldier who will be quartered in their homes. On the Malabar coast—whence King Solomon probably procured his ivory, apes, and peacocks—a colporteur went from hut to hut among the palm-trees, and found some villagers willing to listen with attention and approval; but others fled or hid themselves, afraid that he would use magic to bewitch them into the Christian faith.

In a Frozen Land.

Right in the heart of northern Siberia, more than 5,000 miles east of St. Petersburg, stands the city of Yakutsk, on the banks of the river Lena which drains a vast region where "there is only one-seventh part of a man to a square mile." Yakutsk is said to be one of the coldest places on the face of the earth. From December to February the mercury will be frozen for weeks together. Colporteur Korotki and his son Ivan spent the winter of 1909-10 among the Yakuts who inhabit this great lone land, for whom the Bible Society has published the four Gospels in their own tongue. The Bishop of Yakutsk showed a friendly interest in our colporteur, giving him an open letter of recommendation addressed to the clergy of his sub-Arctic diocese. Early in November Korotki was allowed to travel among the Bishop's personal

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servants, who accompanied their master to Viliuisk, 400 miles north-east of Yakutsk. They travelled by sledges, which were drawn sometimes by reindeer, sometimes by horses.

On their outward journey Korotki writes: "We passed no dwelling for five days, save the solitary post-stations, which are kept by quite illiterate Yakuts. I sold copies of the Bible to several of the clergy at places where the Bishop stopped and held services." In Viliuisk Korotki spent a fortnight, and every day saw him engaged in house-to-house colportage, which resulted in a sale of seventy-nine books. "No colporteur," he writes, "had ever been here before, and I found the inhabitants more religiously inclined than in the town of Yakutsk. Many welcomed me, and were glad of an opportunity to purchase a copy of God's Word."

Korotki's journey back to Yakutsk was accomplished in four days and nights' continuous travelling. The only stoppages made were to put in fresh relays of horses or reindeer at the lonely post-stations, while a hurried bite and glass of hot tea were swallowed. "The reason for such haste was that the medical inspector, who was taking me back with him free of charge, had heard in Viliuisk that a band of 'politicals' intended to hold him up. It was for this also that we had a Cossack convoy."

When Korotki reached Yakutsk he found his son Ivan laid up with severe frost-bite. During his father's absence Ivan had undertaken a tour in the vicinity of the town, visiting villages within a radius of about 170 miles. "I hired a horse and sleigh," he writes, "to take me to the villages. My driver was able to speak Yakut. We could not travel much during the nights owing to dense fogs, and the cold was something past description. On entering a hut or wigwam we made straight for the open fire. We rose in the morning feeling frozen inside. The great drawback is that so few of these Yakuts are able to read, which makes our work much more difficult."

On the Road to Nazareth.

As one result of the new political order of things at Constantinople it has been possible for the first



A COLPORTEUR IN THE HOLY LAND.

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time for many years to send a colporteur into the Holy Land. He is an Armenian, "with grace in his heart and sunshine in his face," who has carried the Scriptures from door to door in Bethlehem, Hebron, Tiberias, Nazareth, and Cana of Galilee. On his way to Nazareth he drove in a vehicle with three Roman priests, two Moslems, a Turkish soldier, and a robber in chains. The colporteur brought out the Gospels in Turkish, which the robber understood, but, as his hands were chained, the soldier held the book while the robber read aloud St. Luke xv.; he wanted to keep the volume, so as he had no money the driver paid for it. When they reached Nazareth each passenger bought a copy of the Scriptures in the language which he knew best.

At the Water-gates of the World.

Quays and harbours everywhere are thronged with polyglot seamen, belonging to scores of nationalities. The Bible Society pays special attention to the varied needs and opportunities which are met with in a port. At Marseilles and Las Palmas and Antofagasta, at Bombay and Singapore, sailors from many lands can obtain the Scriptures in their own tongue. Port Said is the great gateway between the East and the West, where Mr. Rudyard Kipling asserts that you can meet any given person if you will only wait long enough. Last year our colporteurs in that harbour visited 2,416 passenger and cargo steamers, besides Greek sponge-fishers, and fruit-boats from Palestine; more than 10,000 copies of the Scriptures were sold in thirty-nine different languages. Here are two or three glimpses of these colporteurs at their work in the harbour of Port Said.

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Colporteur Segal boarded a Russian steamer which was carrying Turkish and Egyptian pilgrims to Mecca. One *fellah* from Egypt bought a copy of the *Zaboor* (*i. e.*, Psalms), and after reading it for a little tossed it into the sea, saying, "Evil is upon me for reading that book." Near by stood a Moslem from Bosnia, who wanted to buy a Croatian Bible; but he said, "I cannot take it with me to Mecca, because ill would befall me." Then some Turks purchased copies of Job and the Gospels, whereupon the Egyptian repented of his folly, and bought another copy of the Psalms.

"On board an English ship the chief steward, who was a Chinaman, greeted me and asked, 'Don't you know me?' 'I am not sure that I do,' I replied. 'On our last voyage I bought eight Chinese Gospels, which I gave away to my countrymen, and now I want some more.'"

"Having obtained permission to board an Austrian battleship, I took with me a good supply of Scriptures in a variety of languages; and although it was near the end of the month, when sailors usually have little or no money, I sold them a Croatian and a Hungarian Bible, sixteen New Testaments in five different languages, and eighteen Croatian Gospels. As I was about to leave, the officers called me into the mess-room, and after some friendly conversation, in which they asked about our Society, they bought an English Bible and three German Bibles."

A Journey towards Timbuktu.

Our Society has recently appointed the Rev. J. A. Mesnard as its Sub-agent for pioneer work in Senegambia. M. Mesnard is a Frenchman by birth and a probationary minister of the French Wesleyan Church. He has served for two years as a mission-schoolmaster in Dahomey, where he acquired the Popo language. After spending some months in Algeria to gain experience and to make progress in Arabic, M. Mesnard left Tangier early in the spring of 1910 for St. Louis, Senegal. A provisional plan has been drawn up for his work during the next

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eighteen months. At St. Louis he begins the study of the Bambara language, and is to take a short journey up the river Senegal. He will next visit Bathurst, and make a journey up the river Gambia. He will then proceed to Konakry, and find his way on into the interior.

“Deep in that lion-haunted inland lies
A mystic city, goal of high emprise.”

M. Mesnard hopes to reach the watershed of the Niger, so that it may be possible for him to travel down that river and penetrate in 1911 as far as Timbuktu. From St. Louis, just before Easter, 1910, M. Mesnard writes: “Our work in Senegambia will be, I believe, very interesting and successful—at any rate, much more than I thought. . . . I am very happy here; there is a magnificent field opening before us. I wish I had ten lives—I would give them all for Bible work in the Sudan.”

Where Men may not Enter.

One outstanding feature of life in many Eastern lands is the general seclusion of women. Only those who have lived in the East understand how widespread and rigid and jealous that seclusion can become. Only women who have penetrated behind the close-drawn curtains of the *zenana* realize what an atmosphere too often reigns there—of idleness and ignorance, of sensuality and superstition. Nowhere is the Gospel more sorrowfully needed than among these multitudes of women who are shut away beyond the reach of all ordinary evangelists and missionaries. To carry the Scriptures into the recesses of the *zenana* the Bible

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Society maintains 600 native Christian Biblewomen, who work under the direction of about forty different missionary organizations in the East. They are employed chiefly in India and Ceylon, in Egypt and Syria. And they can visit tens of thousands of their neglected sisters, reading and explaining the Gospel to them, and teaching them to read it for themselves.

The opportunities in such service are immense, as its results are incalculable. Sir Andrew Fraser quotes the saying: "The greatest need of India is a new grandmother." For the grandmother in her seclusion wields almost despotic authority over the men as well as the women of an Indian home. And the Book of books can speak with strange spiritual power to those who hear it for the first time. "One day the passage which was being read in a *zenana* seemed to exert unusual influence. As she listened, the Hindu wife became absorbed, her dark eyes glowed with new light. 'A woman wrote that,' she exclaimed at last; 'no one but a woman could know what you say.' But it was the story of the Magdalene who bathed our Lord's feet with her tears, and the words were those uttered by the Son of God."

The Price of Ubiquity.

Last year the Bible Society expended altogether on its colporteurs and Biblewomen no less than £47,520. In some parts of the world the cost cannot but be very heavy. Take South America, for instance. In that continent during the year 1910, fourteen colporteurs are being employed in the Republics of the Pacific slope, and their combined



A QUECHUA INDIAN IN PERU
STANDING BEFORE A WALL OF INCA MASONRY 500 YEARS OLD.

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salaries will amount to £1,750. Travelling expenses form a further heavy item. During six months of 1909 the travelling expenses of four of our ablest and most experienced Bible-sellers were as follows: Colporteur Herrera in Peru, £86; Colporteur Litardo in Peru and Bolivia, £74; Colporteur Villafuerte in Bolivia, £68; Colporteur Orellana on the Nitrate Pampa of Chile, £60—a total of £288.

The immense distances which the men must travel and the physical obstacles which have to be overcome inevitably make their travelling expenses a serious charge. It is not easy to realize that the western regions of South America are the most mountainous mission-field in the world. Yet those enormous elevations have to be scaled if the Bible is to be carried to the scattered inhabitants on the slopes of the Andes. Peru has a population one-third less than that of London, yet its people are dispersed over a wild mountainous territory, far more rugged than Switzerland, eight times as large as England, with no roads and only a few railways. Bolivia, Chile, Ecuador, and Columbia present similar obstacles to the traveller. Outside the cities of Lima and Callao there are no regions in Peru with a centralized population, and consequently the colporteurs must cover very great distances in order to reach the inhabitants.

Thanks to our Society and kindred institutions, aided by their missionary coadjutors, the Bible is by far the most ubiquitous book in the world to-day, the most extensively circulated, and most widely read. But there are still multitudes in many lands who have never even seen it. Last year in Brazil our colporteur in the State of Santa Catharina

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met a man who "was surprised to come across such a book as the Bible. He did not know what it was. 'Did you write it?' he said. 'No.' 'Did you print it?' 'No.' 'Did you bind it?' 'No.' 'Then why do you sell that, and nothing else?' I gave him my reason, and told him what the Book had done for me and for thousands more besides. The man bought a Bible, and ten Gospels to give away."

We cannot close this section more aptly than by citing the following experience which occurred among the snowy peaks of the Andes. Crossing those great mountains by the steepest and loftiest railway in the world, as high above the sea as the summit of Mont Blanc, Colporteur Valenzuela met a middle-aged man who put one unanswerable question: "How is it that during all the years of my life I never before heard that Jesus Christ spoke these precious words?"

THE TEST OF CHEAPNESS.

*“ Earth gets its price for what Earth gives us ;
The beggar is taxed for a corner to die in,
The priest hath his fee who comes and shrives us,
We bargain for the graves we lie in ;
At the devil's booth are all things sold,
Each ounce of dross costs its ounce of gold ;
For a cap and bells our lives we pay,
Bubbles we buy with a whole soul's tasking :
'Tis heaven alone that is given away,
'Tis only God may be had for the asking.”*

J. R. LOWELL.

In this democratic age the idea of popularity is closely bound up with the idea of cheapness. When tradesmen advertize bargain-sales and railway companies issue excursion-tickets “at popular prices,” we understand them to mean prices which appeal to the multitude and bring what is offered into the reach of common people. Now within living memory books of all sorts have grown amazingly cheaper. For one thing, the reading public in this country has increased by leaps and bounds since the auspicious year 1871, when it was decreed that every child in England must go to school. To-day, the whole population is reached by means of the printed page. Moreover, both the cost of printing and the cost of paper have steadily diminished,

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until we are now able to produce books at prices which would have seemed incredible only a generation ago. Hence it becomes one sure sign of an author's widespread influence that his works are issued in sixpenny editions. Lord Rosebery once declared the *imprimatur* of successful writing to be the thumb-mark of the artizan.

The Price of Books—

It is by no means easy to determine the prices at which books in manuscript used to be sold, in classical and in mediæval times, and then to translate those prices into their equivalents in our present currency. Among the later Greeks and Romans the craft of the copyist was certainly carried on in an organized way and on a large scale at centres like Rome and Alexandria and Constantinople, while the cost of reproducing manuscripts was lessened by employing slaves who were trained to act as scribes. St. John Chrysostom's sermons distinctly assume that his hearers possessed, or had access to, copies of the Scriptures. Probably such copies were less costly and more common at Antioch in the fourth century than they were at London in the fourteenth. Hallam estimated that the price of books in Europe was reduced four-fifths by the invention of printing. Printed books, however, appeared at first in very limited impressions. Down to the end of the fifteenth century an edition seldom exceeded three hundred copies.

—and of Bibles.

The earliest printed Bibles were by no means cheap. Copies of the first Bible ever printed at



Photo by

Johnston and Hoffmann.

A SCRIBE IN THE STREET AT LUCKNOW.

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Rome, 1471, cost 10 papal ducats—about £50 of our money. No fewer than eighteen editions of the Bible had been printed in German—all cumbrous and costly folios—before Luther issued his version of the New Testament, which was sold for a florin and a half.

Coverdale's Great Bible, which King Henry VIII. ordered to be placed in every parish church in England, cost 10s. unbound and 12s. bound—prices equivalent to about £6 and £7 5s. to-day. The first Bible printed in Scotland, a folio edition of the Geneva version, appeared at Edinburgh in 1579, and by an order of the General Assembly each parish in Scotland subscribed for a copy, the price being £4 13s. 4d. Scots currency, or about 7s. 6d. in contemporary English money—equivalent to over £4 to-day.

Under the Stuarts the price of English Bibles was kept up by means of various patents and monopolies granted to the printers, and this developed a lucrative trade in smuggling pirated editions from Holland into this country. The British and Foreign Bible Society was founded in 1804 in order to make the Scriptures cheap and accessible to every one. At that time the cheapest English Bible cost more than 4s. 6d. and the cheapest English Testament cost more than 1s. 6d. The Society's earliest published price list announces an edition of the English Testament, brevier 12mo, "strongly bound in sheep," price 1s.; and an edition of the English Bible, nonpareil 8vo, in calf, price 3s. The Society's Fifth Annual Report states that the sale prices "are fixed upon an average of 20% per cent. below the cost prices."

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The Bible Society's Cheap Editions.

During more than a century of progress our Society has not only achieved astonishing success, but it has advanced far nearer to its ideal. As a rule, it sells the Scriptures—because ordinary persons will value and read a book which they have spent even the smallest coin to secure. The most experienced and devoted missionaries unanimously ratify this policy of common-sense, knowing by experience the mischief worked by indiscriminate free distribution. Most of the Society's books, however, are cheap popular editions, and their prices in any country are fixed not by what the edition costs to produce, but by what the poorest class of labourers in that country can afford to pay. These cheap editions are provided in each language, and their circulation represents the bulk of the Society's work. Better bound copies are provided for people who require them: but upon such books the Society does not feel justified in incurring loss.

Some examples will illustrate how this works out in practice. The cheapest edition of Shakespeare's works ever issued in England was priced at 1s., in paper covers. Our Society sells an English Bible, bound, for 6d., and another in larger print for 10d.; the Revised Version may also be had for 10d., while an excellent school Bible in admirably clear type is sold for 1s. All these editions entail considerable loss. Of the Society's penny English Testament more than 9,000,000 copies have been issued during the last quarter of a century—at a *net loss* of over £25,000. In France, Italy, and Germany the Society's cheapest Bible is sold for about 1s., which also involves a loss on each copy.

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The Society's 6d. Dutch Bible is by far the cheapest book in South Africa.

In the Mission Field.

It is in the mission field, however, that the greatest differences occur between the actual cost of producing the books and the prices at which they are sold. A few concrete cases will make this clear. In each of the great languages of India the Society publishes a Bible at 1s., the cost of production varying from 1s. 8d. to 3s. New Testaments in India are sold uniformly at 4d., though the cost price varies from 5d. to 1s. 2d., the average being about 8d. Single Gospels are sold uniformly at $\frac{1}{4}$ d., their cost varying from $\frac{1}{2}$ d. to 1d.

In Madagascar a Bible which costs about 1s. 8d. to produce is sold at 1s. In Japan a New Testament which costs 7 *sen* to print and bind may be bought for 5 *sen*, that is, $1\frac{1}{4}$ d.

In China the wages of a common coolie in many provinces amounts to no more than 6d. or 7d. a day. The New Testament in an excellent *format* is sold for 2d., while cheaper copies can be had for a fraction over 1d. Beautifully printed Gospels are sold from $\frac{1}{4}$ d. to $\frac{1}{2}$ d. each. A well-bound Bible is sold for 6d.; if it were an ordinary Chinese book, it would be considered cheap at seven times that price.

The Expense of Production.

Moreover, in all the above-mentioned instances, "cost of production" means simply the bare amount spent on paper, printing, and binding; it takes no account at all of the heavy expenditure necessarily incurred by a great publishing house for establishment, salaries, distribution, freights, and discounts.

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Since our Society does not confine itself to populous and accessible areas, but sends its books into every inhabited region which it can possibly reach, the total expense of providing a Bible for a reader must needs be greatly increased. For instance, the Society has on occasion spent as much as £60 in freight, merely to send out £100 worth of Bibles and Testaments to a remote mission.

Editions, again, cost more in proportion to produce when only a limited number of copies can be disposed of. But our Society does not refuse to undertake a translation or to print an edition because it may find comparatively few readers. Bibles in some versions cost quite 4s. apiece, and they are sold for 1s. because that price is all that their readers can afford to pay.

For the Cree Indians.

To revise the Bible for the Cree Indians, and to print an edition of 1,000 copies in syllabic character, cost our Society more than £1,700. These Bibles are sold for a mere fraction of what they have cost. The Indians are very grateful for so generous a gift; and the missionaries who are working among the Crees have been quick to recognize its value for their own labours. The Synod of the Diocese of Saskatchewan recently forwarded the following resolution:

“The Synod desires to express its deep gratitude to the British and Foreign Bible Society for its liberality in publishing the Revised Version of the Holy Scriptures in the Cree Indian language. The members of the Synod realize the truly Christian generosity of the Society in providing the Word of God not only for the millions in China, among other thickly



Photo by

A CORNER IN ST. SOPHIA, CONSTANTINOPLE.

Gulmez Freres.

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populated countries, but even for the few and scattered natives of this land ; and they earnestly pray that God's blessing may rest on the Society and its glorious work."

"Cheaper than Cigarette-papers."

Such low prices impress even casual purchasers. In Algeria, Colporteur Rolot has become known as the man who sells Gospels for two *sous*. We hear of Moslems in Constantinople complaining because the New Testament costs so much less than the Koran. At Alexandria a colporteur offered some halfpenny Gospels to an Armenian, who exclaimed, "What, Gospels for a halfpenny! Why, they are cheaper than cigarette-papers." Then he added, "I want a New Testament for myself first, and then fifteen Gospels for my comrades," and he gladly paid the price. In Brazil, however, one man objected: "Your book is no good, because it is so cheap." "Do you ever use homœopathy?" asked the colporteur. "Yes, hardly anything else." "Well, did it ever do you any good?" "Most certainly." "But I don't believe in your remedy." "Why not?" "Because it is so cheap." He saw the point, and bought a New Testament.

From Tunis our colporteur writes :

"In a barber's shop a customer asked me what my trade was. On hearing that I was a Bible colporteur he said, 'Then you are not a Jew, but a Protestant.' In our conversation I directed his thoughts to Christ as the Messiah foretold by the prophets. When I had finished reading several passages and answering his questions he said, 'It is marvellous ; please sell me a Bible. Here are five *francs*.' 'No sir,' I replied, 'it costs only one *franc* and a quarter.' His answer was, 'It is wonderfully cheap. Be assured that I will study it.'"

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“Yet how precious!”

During the spring of 1910 many thoughts and prayers turned anxiously to the great Chinese city of Changsha, the capital of Hunan, which was for long the most anti-foreign and anti-Christian province in China. Down to 1901, Changsha, with its 200,000 people, was closed against missions. A missionary of the C.I.M. described how the earliest convert in that city came to him, holding a copy of the Chinese New Testament. “Oh, how precious is this Book!” he exclaimed. “You sell it to the people for a very small sum (a fraction over a penny). How cheap it is, and yet how precious! Why, ten thousand ounces of gold would not buy this Book, for herein is contained the Way of Life.”

Curious Coin.

Low as are the prices charged for the Scriptures, we hear again and again of folk in such dire poverty that they are literally penniless. At Pisco, in Peru, last year a shoemaker bartered a pair of boots for a Bible, and another man gave away his walking-stick for a Testament. On the frontier of China a missionary reports that he exchanged some Tibetan Gospels for coral beads and cloth. High up among the Andes a man parted with a pigeon for a Testament. At a lonely hut in Venezuela a man and his wife gravely “offered a sucking-pig for a Bible, as they had no money.” In Styria our colporteur writes, “I was sometimes constrained to take fruit for my books. Thus one peasant gave me 32 lbs. of apples for a Bible. Another time I had to accept eggs, as the people could not pay

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in cash, but were eager to possess the Scriptures." In Dalmatia we read: "Despite the great poverty which reigns here, the desire for the Word of God is manifest. In one village I could sell only a few Gospels; there was no money. I had left it, and walked a considerable distance, when a lad came running after me with three eggs, which he offered for a Gospel. Another time, at an inn, a young fellow gave the landlord his coat in pledge for the 6 *heller* (= $\frac{1}{2}$ d.) with which he wanted to buy a Gospel." At Namakal, in the Madras Presidency, when a colporteur had read the Scriptures and offered them for sale, the people said, "What shall we do? There is no rain. These books are good, but we have no money to buy them." Thereupon the colporteur accepted an offer to exchange some Gospels for palmyra fruit. At Jerusalem our colporteur does not omit to visit the Russian, Coptic, and Abyssinian convents, and here antiquities are sometimes offered in exchange for copies of the Scriptures.

For the Blind.

In the United Kingdom one person in every thousand is blind. In India over 350,000 and in China over 500,000 are totally blind, while other Eastern countries contain a similar proportion of people in the same pitiable condition. Copies of the Scriptures in embossed type for the blind were first issued by the Bible Society in 1838, and ever since then they have been steadily circulated, at great expense, either free or much below cost-price. The Society has now published—or helped to circulate—the Bible, or some portion of it, for the blind in thirty-one different languages—employing six

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different systems of Braille type as well as Moon type. In nearly all these languages the Bible is the only book thus issued—the sole book which is available for the blind to read.

Books in embossed type for the blind cannot be other than cumbrous and expensive. A complete English Bible in Braille type costs £5 to produce, and occupies thirty-nine big volumes, which fill a shelf 7 feet long. Our Society has just issued a new English Braille Bible, each volume of which costs from 2s. 3d. to 3s. This is sold to any British institution for befriending the blind at 1s. per volume. Moreover any poor blind man or woman who applies can obtain from the Society a Gospel or a Psalter in English Braille as a free gift, on the recommendation of some minister of religion.

Without Money or Price.

The Bible Society is not in bondage to its rule that normally the Scriptures shall be sold rather than given away. While its cheap editions circulate at nominal prices all over the world, its colporteurs have discretion to present a volume free to any one they meet who can read, and really desires to read the Gospel, but is too impoverished to find a single coin with which to purchase it. Moreover, in cases of special opportunity, or emergency, or calamity, copies of the Scriptures are freely distributed among those who need such gifts. Here are a few examples of the way in which God's Book is put into the hands of His needy children. Free grants of vernacular Scriptures were made last year to the convicts at Italian penal settlements; to Chinese prisoners in the gaols at Shanghai and at Hong Kong; to political



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prisoners and exiles in Siberia ; to Nicaraguan soldiers engaged in a campaign in Central America ; to priests and monks in the Buddhist temples and monasteries round Hangchow ; to lepers in the asylum at Pretoria ; to inmates of the prisons at Moscow ; to dock-labourers on the Volga at Nijni Novgorod ; to hospitals at St. Petersburg, Odessa, and Tiflis ; to emigrants sailing from Hamburg and Bremen ; to Armenian orphan children at Mersina ; to the sufferers from earthquakes in Sicily, and in Japan.

Copies of the Scriptures in English were accepted last year as gifts from our Society by 5,300 students at Indian Universities. In the Transvaal 3,000 Chinese Gospels were given away among the last batch of coolies before they set out to return to China. At Quebec 28,000 Gospels in thirty-two different languages were distributed among immigrants landing from Europe.

For our own Country.

In our own land the poor are not forgotten. The Society spends several thousands of pounds each year in making grants of the Scriptures at home, either free or at greatly reduced prices. In this generous fashion it becomes the willing partner in all forms of Christian effort and service. It helps countless Sunday-schools belonging to all denominations. It joins hands with orphanages and hospitals and asylums ; with soldiers' institutes and sailors' homes and theological training colleges ; with missions to navvies and hop-pickers and emigrants and deep-sea fishermen. It supplies the Scriptures to prisons, and barracks, and training ships, and police

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and railway stations. It remembers the blind, the crippled, and the fallen. It places a Bible in the pocket of every boy or girl whom philanthropic institutions send out to begin life afresh in Canada. It is safe to say that our Society has done more than all other agencies combined to put into the hands of the poorest of the English poor that Book "which is compensation for all things."

* * * * *

On the whole, out of every £1 which the Bible Society expends in preparing and distributing the Scriptures, about 7s. 7d., comes back to it from the proceeds of sales. For the remainder it must rely simply upon the gifts of Christian people. This is why it needs and claims the generous help of every reader and lover of the Bible.

THE TEST OF VITALITY.

“Men’s Works have an age like themselves ; and though they out-live their Authors, yet they have a stint and period for their duration : This only is a work, too hard for the teeth of time, and cannot perish but in the general Flames, when all things shall confess their Ashes.”

SIR THOMAS BROWNE : *Religio Medici.*

LITERATURE divides itself into two main classes—books which are permanent, and books which are fugitive. And so another criterion which we apply to the Bible may be described as the test of vitality. Compared with most other books we can say that it survives, while they die and are forgotten.

This will appear when we turn to the statistics of modern publications. Every year in January *The Publisher’s Circular* prints an analysis of the number of books which have been published in this country during the previous twelve months. And though the figures include hundreds of pamphlets, primers, calendars, and bound serials, yet they yield clear and conclusive evidence on the question under consideration.

During 1909, the number of publications recorded—new books and new editions together—was for the first time over 10,000, the actual figures being 10,725. This is an increase of 904 upon the total for 1908.

The new books published during 1909 amounted to 8,446—nearly 1,000 more than in 1908, and 2,475 more than in 1899.

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The new editions issued during 1909 of books which had appeared already amounted to 2,279. This was 30 fewer than in 1908, but 683 more than in 1899.

It appears, therefore, that of the total number of publications in 1909, about 21 per cent. consisted of new editions. Many of these were reprints of standard authors. So that we may safely say that of the new books issued in England not one in five ever reaches a second edition. There is no reason to suppose that new publications are any less ephemeral in France and Germany and America. The average life of a modern book is only about four or five years: after that, the booksellers tell you, "it is dead"—and it has no resurrection.

Whereas the Bible to-day, at the end of so many centuries, is more vitally alive than ever. It is being printed in vaster numbers, and is circulated more widely over the world; it is studied more profoundly, and cherished more passionately; it is exerting a mightier influence upon mankind than at any previous period in its history.

"The seasons change, the winds they shift and veer :
The green of yesteryear
Is dead : the birds depart, the groves decay :
Empires dissolve and peoples disappear. . . ."

"Other books pass away; but of this the silver cord shall never be loosed, nor the golden bowl broken, nor the mourners that go about the streets proclaim that at last the great Book is dead and carried to the charnel-house of dead religions."

The Secret of Vitality.

It is worth while to enquire what are those essential qualities in a book by virtue of which it

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remains evergreen for ages, while generations of its rivals vanish like withered leaves. Style has been called the great antiseptic of literature: and few indeed are the authors whose works endure unless they possess this distinctive charm. Style, however, is far from being the supreme characteristic of Holy Scripture. Judged merely as Greek literature, the prose of Plato stands high above the prose of the Apostle John. The power of the Bible does not reside in wisdom of words. We have already considered the test of circulation; but what does that actually tell us? The number of copies of a book which are sold may only indicate how far the book appeals to some passing interest or curiosity, how far it reflects a fleeting emotion, or catches the mood of the hour, or pleases the humour of the crowd.

The history of literature proves that for any book to succeed permanently, it must correspond to some demand which has a permanent place in human life. We observe that almost the only modern books which circulate by millions come within the general category of romance. Because for ordinary readers the dry bones of prosaic fact must be touched by an enchanter's wand before they assume any appearance of life, any attribute of love or pity or even hate.

“ ‘But,’ you say, ‘it is only a romance.’

“ True. It is only human life in the highways and hedges, and in the streets and lanes of the city, with the ceaseless throbbing of its quivering heart; it is only daily life from the workshop, from the court, from the market, and from the stage; it is only kindness and neighbourhood and child life, and the fresh wind of heaven, and the waste of sea and forest, and the sunbreak upon the stainless peaks, and contempt of wrong

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and pain and death, and the passionate yearning for the face of God, and woman's tears, and woman's self-sacrifice and devotion, and woman's love. Yes, it is only a romance." *

The masters of modern romance, Scott and Dickens and Victor Hugo and Tolstoy, are essentially humanists. In this they are allied to the kings of literature, Homer and Shakespeare and Goethe. The classics of humanity are classic because they deal with matters of enduring and universal interest — matters which concern every one and touch the heart of the race. Now there is one Book, and only one, which embraces all the heights and depths of human nature. The Bible belongs to those elemental things, like sunshine and mother's milk, which can never become obsolete or out of date, because they are the common need and the common heritage of mankind. The Bible is concerned with our deepest wants, our darkest problems, and it faces them with absolute seriousness and sincerity. It speaks with accents which are not of this world. It teaches us about the only things which really matter in the end. When Sir Walter Scott lay on his deathbed, he begged his nephew to read to him. "What book shall I read?" asked Lockhart. "What book?" said the dying man, "there is only one Book."

"Nuovo ed Eterno."

On the title-page of an Italian pocket Testament printed at Lyons in 1551 we read: *Il Nuovo ed Eterno Testamento di Giesu Christo*—"The New and Eternal Testament of Jesus Christ." The vitality of this Book appears not merely when we compare it with the masterpieces of literature. The everlast-

* J. H. Shorthouse: *Preface to "John Inglesant."*

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ing Gospel is as mighty to-day to quicken human hearts and to regenerate human characters as ever it was in days gone by. We will quote a few out of many fresh examples which bear witness to the power of an endless life.

Condemning and Convincing.

Continually the Spirit of righteousness uses the Bible to arouse men's consciences and convict them of their sins. In Cairo last year a Moslem who had begun to read the Scriptures quickly confessed, "This book condemns many things that I do. It goes against my will and my actions." A Sinhalese goldsmith who had bought a copy of the Book of Proverbs from a colporteur in Ceylon, opened it casually at the beginning of the eleventh chapter and began to read: "A false balance is an abomination to the Lord: but a just weight is His delight." At once he flung the book away, declaring that as it was quite against his trade he would never read it. Near Casablanca, an intelligent Moor said to our colporteur, "No, we won't buy your books, for they will make Christians of us." "Exactly so," was the answer. "A book which is capable of doing what you have just said demonstrates itself to be a book of power, and when it changes a man's heart and conduct it proves that it is what it claims to be—the Word of the living God."

The "Jesus Book" in Japan.

A young Japanese who studied the Bible for some time in order to controvert it, was finally converted. Returning to his native village, he fearlessly confessed his new faith. This roused bitter opposition, headed by an old school-fellow who came with the

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demand, "Give up this hateful thing, or leave our village." "I will go," said the Christian, "but first let me tell you all what it is that I believe, so that you and I may know just why I am being expelled." Accordingly, Bible in hand, he met the village assembly that night, and then for several other nights, until he had won adherents enough to start a Sunday-school—to the fierce anger of his anti-Christian school-fellow. The latter, however, was drafted off into the Japanese army and sent to Manchuria. There, to his disgust, he found himself under a sergeant who was a devout Christian and gave him a New Testament. He vowed to destroy the book as soon as he was free from his service. Just before being ordered home to Japan, he and his comrades were looting a Chinese house, from which he brought away a splendid scroll inscribed with most impressive words. On his return to his native village, they made him a feast of welcome, at which the soldier proudly displayed his trophy and praised its beautiful motto. The Christian listened to the admiring comments, and then said: "But those are not the words of a Chinese sage; they are taken from the 'Jesus Book' which you despise and hate." The soldier was deeply impressed. Finally he came to the Christian and said, "I surrender, I surrender. That God of yours and that Book of yours find me out wherever I go. Now I will try to know them." Thereupon he sought further teaching and is now waiting for baptism.

Called to be a Soldier.

A young Bulgarian soldier in camp at Shumla bought a Bible. Returning home after the com-

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pletion of his military service, he incurred no little persecution, even in his own household, by his steadfast witness to the Gospel. So he went to the village priest and asked if it was wrong to read the Bible. "No," said the priest, "the Bible is the best book in the world." "But my friends persecute me for reading this book, and call me a Protestant." Then the priest said to the young man's friends, "You do not well to trouble this man; let him read to you, and read for yourselves, and pray to God for guidance." The result was that the man's friends and neighbours began to give heed, and became attentive hearers of the Word. "This is God's doing," said the young man to a colporteur, as his friends came to buy for themselves the book whose witness they had believed. "Who has taught this man?" they asked. "These are divine things of which we have never heard until now!"

More than he expected.

A young Indian employed in one of the railway offices at Madras overheard the remark that the best book from which to learn English was the English Bible. Accordingly, he managed to obtain a copy from a friend, giving him in exchange a volume of Renan. The young man set himself to read the Bible in order to improve his knowledge of English. Before long, however, the Book began to grip his attention; it fascinated him; he read it through once, twice, thrice. At length he was convinced that the Christian faith was true, and that Christ was able to save him from his sins. He went to see the missionary who tells the story, and after long conversation satisfied him that his knowledge was clear and

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his experience definite. In the end he was baptized and received into Church fellowship—won, like Tatian and Justin Martyr, by devout study of the Holy Scriptures.

A Japanese Testament in Canada.

In the Canadian north-west a colporteur had sold a Japanese Testament the year before to a Japanese immigrant woman at Fernie. The colporteur now writes :

“On that occasion I sold an English Testament to another person in the house, chiefly through the influence of that Japanese woman. She stood up bravely for what she knew to be right, and her broken English, spoken from a simple heart, carried by storm the opposition to the Word of God. I can see her now as she stood pleading : ‘May-be you sorry—you so long time read—you not member—me not read much—me not Xlistian—me read more—perhaps me be Xlistian.’ Ever since then, she had been diligently reading the New Testament in her own tongue, and now she declared to me that she had no doubt that God had received her into the Household of Faith, through His Son Jesus Christ. I asked how she knew, and her reply was so refreshingly simple : ‘Nobody teach me—I read the Bible, and I think, and God help me think, and I know. Now I hope God will stay with me always.’ I gave her His promise that He would never leave us. ‘Oh ! that is good,’ she exclaimed. She was testifying to her own countrymen, and was the means of helping me to dispose of the Scriptures among them.”

A Borrowed Book.

Writing from Horqueta, in Paraguay, Mr. Whittington, of the Inland South American Missionary Union, relates the following experience :

“Towards midday, as the sun was very hot, I reined up for shelter at a house near Yaguaretecue. There, after some conversation, I gave my host a Gospel, when another man came in

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and, seeing the Gospel, began to examine it carefully. After he had read some passages, he said that he had one like it ; so he went off, and soon returned with an old brown-backed book which turned out to be a New Testament. He told me that a little more than a year ago he had heard the Gospel preached in the south of Paraguay, and had believed ; but he was without a Bible or any portion of the Scriptures, and so he had no means of further instruction. Still he clung to his new hope, and although through these long months he had not met a single Christian or any one to help him on in the Way, yet joy and peace hitherto unknown possessed his soul. At last he had discovered a New Testament, and borrowed it from the owner. Since then he had been carefully reading it, and trying to carry out its instructions in his everyday life. Naturally, he has taken most things literally, but, according to Christ's command, he is seeking to let his light shine. He keeps a small school at present, and endeavours to interest his scholars in the Gospel. I gave him a New Testament for himself and some Gospels for those whom he had interested. He was well pleased, and said that he would return the old brown-backed Testament to its owner, who lived about three leagues away."

The Bible in Bengal.

From Bengal a C.M.S. missionary sends the following testimony :

About three years ago an influential member of one of the reformed Hindu sects found by the road-side a discarded copy of the Prayer Book in Hindi. He read with interest the texts concerning change of heart and mind, as well as other portions of Scripture, including Psalm xcv. These, however, did not satisfy him, and at the first opportunity he bought from a catechist one of the Bible Society's cheap little Gospels.

Having read this, nothing would content him but a copy of the complete Bible. He obtained it, and read first of all the four Gospels, and has since expressed himself as impressed by the unity and witness borne to each other by the various parts of the Bible.

Up to this time the man had received very little help from any teacher ; and it was not until he had been persecuted on

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account of his changed life that he left his native village, bringing with him his wife and children, that they might all be more fully instructed with a view to baptism. This took place in due course, and he returned to live among his fellow-villagers, who in some cases read the Scriptures with him, two of his former persecutors purchasing Bibles. He is now a preacher of the C.M.S., and never ceases urging his hearers to read the Scriptures for themselves, telling them that it was not man's preaching, but the written Word of God which brought him light and salvation.

By a Grave-side in China.

A Baptist missionary living at Pingtu, in the province of Shantung, describes how a very zealous Chinese Christian named Wü first became interested through purchasing the Gospels from a colporteur. Mr. Wü, who belongs to a literary family, was a teacher till the death of his aged father five years ago. Being religiously disposed, he tried many ways to obtain "merit." When his father died, he gave up his school and spent a whole year by his father's coffin—eating and sleeping beside it on the bare earthen floor. Then, after his father's burial, he passed long months by the grave-side, reading over and over again the Gospels which he had bought while he was thus gaining "merit." This he kept up for years—till he grew so deeply impressed by the Gospel that he forsook all his man-made "merit" and became a most earnest follower of our Lord. Last year he was baptized, and now two other men in that village have been led to Christ by Mr. Wü, who says that he can never forget the power of the Gospels he bought from the colporteur.

A Pilgrim Book.

The Rev. J. Steele, of the English Presbyterian Mission, Swatow, writes: "There is now attending

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our church at Taichiao, in the Haiyang hsien, a man who was led to take interest in Christian teaching by reading a Bible which came into his hands when he was working on an estate near Penang. That Bible had been the property of one of our people who went to Penang from our congregation at Mienhu. The book had thus travelled from China to the Straits Settlements, and did its work there; while we reap the results in a place separated from its starting-point by about forty miles."

After an Earthquake.

In the hill country of Southern Rajputana there was in 1909 an earthquake of sufficient magnitude to occasion much anxiety among the people, easily moved to superstitious fears. "What does it mean?" they asked. "What calamities are impending? What can we do to prevent them?" No one could speak with authority. Messages were sent from village to village, calling together the men of wisdom, the religious guides and teachers of the people. Among those summoned was a village *Guru* named Chimman, who had come under the influence of a Christian lady, and whose boy she had taught to read.

At the place appointed some four hundred people assembled, among them half a hundred *Gurus* of repute. For several hours they gave their several opinions. At length one called on Chimman to speak. He said, "I cannot read well, but my boy has with him the Book of God." The lad, only thirteen years of age, stood up before them all. He opened his Hindi Bible and read our Lord's words in St. Luke xxi.: "For these things must come to

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pass, but the end is not just now. . . . In your patience possess ye your souls." Then he read on concerning the judgments of the latter days and the coming of the Son of Man from heaven with power and great glory, concluding with, "Heaven and earth shall pass away: but My words shall not pass away."

A great hush fell upon the people as these words were read. It was as if a divine answer had come to their perplexities and questionings, a solution for the mysteries of earth and heaven. Then one said, "Chimman, you can pray. Pray to Jesus Christ for us." And Chimman, who could not read very well, lifted his voice in prayer, while Hindu and Mussulman, *Guru* and *Chela*, bent their heads in reverence: "Jesus, Lord, have mercy on us. Wash us in Thy precious blood. Make us fit to stand before Thee, accepted in Thy kingdom of righteousness and peace."

On the Edge of Mongolia.

The Rev. O. Oberg, of Saratsi, in the Chinese province of Shansi, writes:

"Colporteur Chang, during the warmer season, worked in the mountain region on the borders of Mongolia, north of Saratsi, where every man has to fight for his own rights. One day we went to visit a village fifteen Chinese miles away. We were invited to a house, where we were astonished to find no idols nor any signs of the usual pictures of the gods, but in place of these there was a New Testament hanging on the wall. On questioning our host, I learned that he had bought that Testament from Colporteur Chang, and had also through the same man been led to believe in the true God."

A Korean Tramp and his Testament.

In the early days of the mission station at Taiku, in Southern Korea, the church building was a house

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with a tiled roof, set amidst a thickly populated section of this city of straw-thatched buildings. One Sunday morning, when the Korean believers and enquirers were assembled for worship and instruction, a veritable tramp arrived and seated himself in the veranda, attracted thither, no doubt, by the tiled roof, thinking that this was some rich man's residence, and that as the sun was nearing high noon, there was the chance of obtaining a portion of rice and a bit of pickled cabbage. The sort of gathering he found there, and the feast of spiritual things, were out of the ordinary in the tramp's experience, and he listened attentively. Finally he said, "I cannot understand all of this, but it seems good. I want to get one of your books." So he purchased a copy of the Chinese New Testament—the only version available in those days—and went his way. He was evidently a man of some education, as he understood how to read Chinese intelligently.

A year or so later a missionary was requested to visit the neighbourhood of Myriyang, where there were reported to be some enquirers. Arriving at the place, who should welcome him but this same tramp who had sat in the church veranda at Taiku on that Sunday morning many months before! The missionary found enquirers not a few, and the first group to be baptized, some months later, numbered fifteen. During his visit, the missionary sat himself one evening in the midst of a group of interested listeners. Their subject was "The Wonderful Book," and much comment was passed on the story of salvation in the New Testament. Finally our tramp friend held up his Chinese Testament—with its covers and its pages next to the covers worn

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to tatters by constant usage—and said, as he pressed it to his breast: “I love this book as a mother loves her child. When she lies down at night, she takes it in her arms and lies down with it. When she rises up in the morning, she straps it on her back and goes out with it. That is the way I love this book. Though I read it a hundred times, it always comes with a fresh flavour to my mouth.” The group of enquirers was the proof of his testimony. The tramp had gone forth with his Testament, reading it and preaching it, and everywhere telling the contents of the “wonderful volume.”

More Beautiful than Music.

From Brazil a colporteur writes:

“One evening an old man came into a shop where I was, and began to tell those around me what he had been reading that day in the New Testament. He spoke of the Baptism, the Temptation, the Transfiguration, the rich young ruler, and the confession of St. Peter. I was astonished, and could not understand how he had got hold of the Testament. He said, ‘Don’t you remember reading this morning in a house, where a boy was so interested that he bought two Gospels? He took them home, and told us what wonderful things were in the books. I said, ‘But thou dost not know how to read.’ He said, ‘Uncle, I heard the colporteur read, and it was more beautiful than music.’ So I took the two Gospels which he bought from you, and I have been reading them all day long. *And this seems to me to be the true religion, because it does not allow any one to live in sin.*”

The Bible and Books of Magic.

At a village in North India resided an aged Brahman, skilled in the use of *mantras*, or magic spells to work good or ill, and especially in the art of casting the evil eye on any whom he wished to harm. He

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was much resorted to and made an income by such sorcery. He had taught this black art to his son, and at his death bequeathed him his books and papers. In some way this young man obtained a copy of the Urdu Bible. As a result of reading it, he gave up casting the evil eye, destroyed his books of magic, and was found by a missionary to be already a confessed Christian, although unbaptized.

A Chinese Soothsayer burns his Books.

In the north-west of the province of Chihli, Mr. Söderbom heard the following testimony direct from a soothsayer who is now a Christian. He said: "I have studied Chinese books for thirty years, but I never found any like your Book." He had then read the New Testament through. But before he finished it, he had of his own accord publicly burned his soothsayer's books. Moreover, he told the people of his village that he would no longer receive money from the temple revenues for his school-teaching, nor would he keep his school in the temple yard. The people thought he must be crazy, but he answered, "Up till now I believed in those false, empty books and deceived you, but now I am going to believe in the truth." He is at present learning the doctrines of Christian faith, and awaiting baptism.

The Result of a Testament in Formosa.

In Formosa, or Taiwan, as the Japanese call it, Mr. Alexander Lawrence came upon the following experience:

Some time ago, a Japanese Christian named Goto was in the habit of distributing the Scriptures among his friends in different parts of Taiwan. One shopkeeper, to whom he offered a Testament, refused to accept it, saying that he would not read

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it, neither would he allow it to remain in his house. "I am going to leave it," said his friend, "whether you want it or not, and I hope you will read it." After Goto left the house the man felt constrained to examine the Testament. Curiosity led him to read it. The more he read, the more he felt it contained a personal message for him. He studied it carefully, and the light of the Gospel streamed into his soul, and he wished to be a Christian. He was eventually baptized; and shortly after his baptism, he died, rejoicing in the hope of everlasting salvation.

The Bible its Own Witness in Ceylon.

Miss Case, of Jaffna, tells how an opponent of Christianity became an earnest Christian worker. In his own words the story runs thus:

"I was a strict Hindu. I never ate meat and always kept caste. In my village a young Christian lived, who used to reason with me and show me even from my Hindu books that I was wrong. I knew nothing about Christianity at that time, so I could not retort. But I determined to purchase a Bible and read it, so that I could make fun of him. I got one and began to read it. But I found that something in me told me that what I read was true and right. So I became a Christian."

The New Testament in Baffin Land.

For the Eskimo people the Bible Society has issued translations of Holy Scripture in three different forms of speech. For those dwelling in Baffin Land the Society publishes the New Testament in the dialect called "Baffin Land Eskimo," translated by the Rev. E. J. Peck, of the C.M.S., who has laboured among the Eskimos since 1876. Leaving Newfoundland in the middle of last summer, Mr. Peck and two colleagues sailed along the coast of Labrador as far as Cape Mugford. From that point it became necessary to traverse a sea of ice for over 300



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miles to the south coast of Baffin Land; and then for 200 miles further their course lay westwards through Hudson Straits.

From an Eskimo hunter, who was out in his canoe prospecting for seals, it was ascertained that some Eskimo were congregated at a sheltered bay called Lake Harbour. Mr. Peck writes: "Under his direction we sailed into Lake Harbour, where we were most cordially received by a large party of these northern people. We found a number of waiting and faithful souls in this desert waste. Some of them, who had been instructed at Blacklead Island, had travelled to Lake Harbour and taught their fellow-countrymen to read the Gospels and Acts. I went to visit the various tents—for the Eskimo are tent-dwellers during the summer months—in order to converse with the people one by one. In all my experience among the Eskimo I have never noticed such marked signs of the Holy Spirit's power. True repentance has been wrought in not a few hearts, and their desire to know more of Christ and to follow Him was most sincere. Some, with tears in their eyes, spoke of the Saviour's love, and one poor woman, who had recently lost her husband, testified earnestly to the comfort she had received through trusting in the Lord."

In his journal Mr. Peck writes again: "Here we see again the leading of God. For one of their number, with the help of a copy of the Gospels which she had carefully read and studied, had tried to teach her neighbours. Sunday after Sunday she had gathered the Eskimo together, and had taught them what she could."

"These remarkable signs were due to reading

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the Gospels and other books which had been brought to them by the Eskimo from Blacklead Island. I took with me this year the Epistles and the Book of Revelation. Through the kind and liberal help of the Bible Society—which is the very heart of all missionary societies—the whole of the New Testament is thus in the hands of many of the Eskimo, and we may look forward to still greater signs of blessing.”

The Missionary Book,

The province of Yunnan in South-West China contains a number of aboriginal tribes, such as the Miao—who are themselves divided into various clans—the Lesu, the Laka, and others. These people for the most part understand Chinese very imperfectly, and speak distinct languages of their own. A remarkable movement towards Christianity is in progress among them, notably among the Hwa Miao, in whose tongue our Society has lately issued the Gospels of St. Mark and St. John. The C.I.M. missionaries describe the way in which tribesmen from remote villages gather at a mission house for instruction. In some of these villages idolatry has been completely swept away, and that without the intervention of any foreigner. The following conversation took place at a C.I.M. mission station:

Missionary: “What are you?” *Tribesman:* “Laka.” *Missionary:* “Where do you live?” *Tribesman:* “Two days away.” *Missionary:* “How many families live in your village?” *Tribesman:* “Forty.” *Missionary:* “How many are studying books, and how many believe?” *Tribesman:* “We all believe.” *Missionary:* “Have you a chapel?”

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Tribesman: "No." *Missionary*: "Do you have worship?" *Tribesman*: "Yes, once in seven days." *Missionary*: "Where, then, do you gather?" *Tribesman*: "On the main road." *Missionary*: "Have you any one that can preach?" *Tribesman*: "Oh, no; we have only had the Book six months." *Missionary*: "How, then, do you worship?" *Tribesman*: "We sing and pray, and then we study our books."

It appears that the books in question are Chinese Gospels or Testaments, which the more intelligent among these people are able to read and explain to the rest; no version has yet been published in the Laka language.

Testimonies might be multiplied from missionaries of many communions, who bear witness from their own experience to the wonderful power of the Bible as an evangelist, even when it precedes Christian preachers and teachers. We may quote from a letter written by the Rev. A. Cabral, of the Protestant Episcopal Church, U.S.A., who is rector of Trinity Church, Porto Alegre, Brazil.

"It is a pity that the Bible has not been even more circulated than it was in Brazil before the advent of the missionary. Had it been more circulated, we should have had fewer difficulties to fight in teaching the doctrine of Christ. The fear of the private examination and study of the Bible is the cause of the backward religious state of these South American countries. Not to allow private reading of the Bible because of certain abuses is like not allowing a person to eat in order to avoid indigestion. The colporteur goes from house to house, from city to city, and leaves behind him that Book of which the reading of the most mysterious part has attached to it the promise, 'Blessed is he that readeth.'"

From the Gold Coast, a native Christian catechist wrote to our Society: "As one cannot cut bush

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without a cutlass, so also without your aid in sending Bibles and Testaments to missionaries, we would hardly be led to Christ."

The annual address of the Ceylon Synod to all the Methodists in Ceylon contains the following sentence : "As members of a Protestant Church it is your business to be defenders of the faith—you, too, are set for the defence of the Gospel. *You cannot do this better than by helping the Bible Society in distributing the Word of God among the people.*"

In Korea.

In no country are Christian missions winning more manifest success than in Korea. Among the Korean Christians themselves a remarkable movement is on foot to distribute the Gospel among their fellow-countrymen. To help them in this effort, our Society published last year a special edition of St. Mark in Korean, which is sold at 1 *sen* (= $\frac{1}{4}$ d.). By the beginning of March, 1910, nearly 600,000 copies had already been bought by Korean Christians for distributing among their neighbours, and another 100,000 were being printed. One striking feature connected with the purchase of these Gospels has been "Day Collections." This means that Korean Christians promised to leave their homes and distribute Gospels and preach at their own charge in heathen villages for a certain number of days—varying from three to ninety—during the three winter months when severe weather prevents work in the fields. At one gathering 159 men pledged themselves to give in the aggregate 2,721 days for this purpose.

In Korea last year nearly 200 Christian congregations observed "Bible Sunday" and collected gifts for

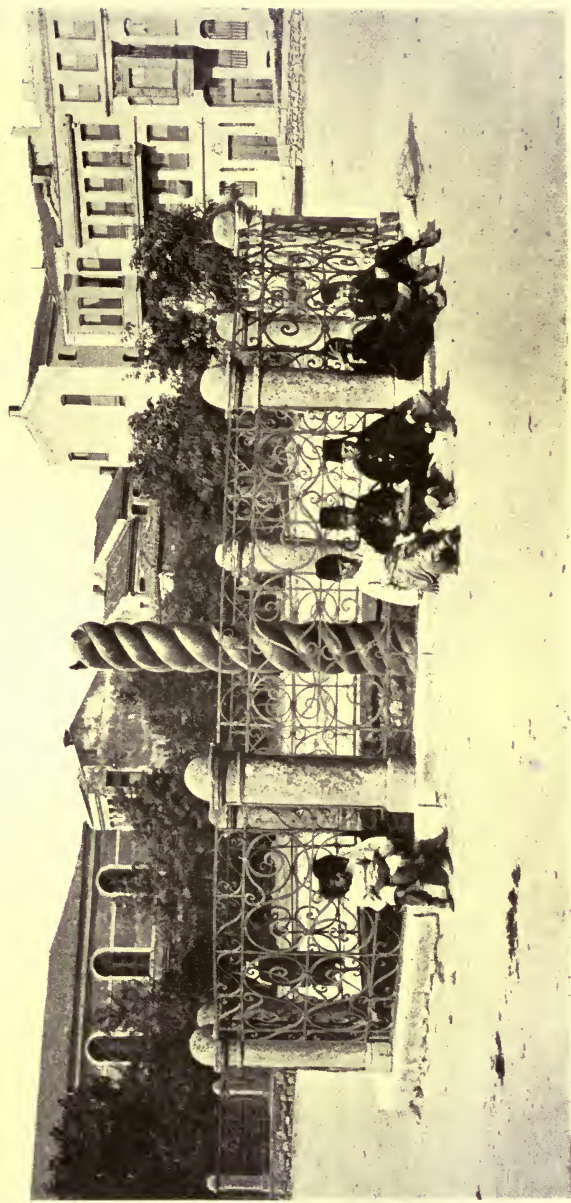


Photo by

TWISTED COLUMN IN THE HIPPODROME, CONSTANTINOPLE.

Gulmez Freres.

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our Society. One missionary sends 15 *yen* (= 30s.) from a company of Korean catechumens on the east coast, which (he says) "grew up entirely because the Bible Society made it possible for me to open up work out there. The offertory meant not a few supperless days to those who contributed. The people are desperately poor, but have a great zeal for the Lord. About 150 attend church, though none of them has yet been baptized." It sounds like a modern echo of the legend of St. Martin of Tours, the young soldier, still unbaptized, who cut his mantle in twain to give half to a shivering beggar; and behold! that night he saw in vision Christ Himself arrayed in the severed cloak, saying to the heavenly host, "My servant Martin, though no more than a catechumen, has clothed Me with this mantle."

The New Turkey.

The past year has provided the world with one signal example of changes which had their origin in the living influence of the Scriptures. Those who know Turkey most intimately confess how large a part the Bible, in the vernaculars of the country, has played in the making of the New Turkey. The American missionaries, who have been working for so many years in nearly every province and part of the Sultan's dominions, have made it one of their chief aims to teach and to circulate God's Book. In their schools and colleges they have about 40,000 pupils daily engaged in systematic Bible-study. Surely it is a significant fact that Enver Bey, the intrepid Albanian leader who risked everything in the interests of constitutional government in Turkey, declared in Smyrna, not many months after the

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promulgation of the Constitution, that he and his colleagues would never have dared to take the steps they did for the establishment of a just and stable government but for their reliance on the foundations laid by the American Mission schools during the last fifty years. Now the power at the back of these American schools has been the Bible in the vernacular.

The world marvelled to see the New Turkish party putting into their motto the words "Equality" and "Fraternity." Islam has never stood for either. Still more remarkable is the recent proclamation by the Sheik-ul-Islam, the religious chief of Muhammadanism, declaring that constitutional government is sanctioned by the Koran ; that Christians who truly worship God are the true brethren of Moslems, and that they also will have a place in Paradise ; that it is the duty of a Muhammadan Government to protect the Christian and the Jew, just as it protects Moslems, and that before the Government and before God all are equal. Here is strange doctrine, and we search in vain through the Koran to discover where the Sheik-ul-Islam found warrant for proclaiming it. The revolution in Turkey could never have taken place but for the leavening truths of the New Testament.

The Answer to Criticism.

No other book exerts such a living influence in the world to-day as the Bible. Such vitality is all the more wonderful when we remember that the Bible has been passing through a century of the fiercest and most remorseless criticism which any book ever had to face since time began. As a matter of fact,

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the Scriptures have gained far more from criticism than they can ever lose. At one of our Society's Centenary meetings, the then Prime Minister, Mr. A. J. Balfour, declared that "these critical researches make the Bible far more a living record of the revelation of God to mankind than it ever was in the pre-critical days." Indeed, most of the questions over which Biblical scholars dispute and contend have little bearing upon the vital spiritual content of Holy Scripture. When criticism has exhausted itself, the Bible remains intact in everything which makes it to be the Bible. Its liquid texture can receive no mortal wound. We meet God in these pages as we meet Him nowhere else. His revelations in nature, in history, in the human conscience, only confirm and illustrate the one supreme manifestation of Himself. Not all the saints together have added a single ray to the glory of God which is in the face of Jesus Christ. As a veteran missionary testifies: "We come back to this, that in the Bible we have the very Word of God made more sure to us than before, even by the experience of doubt and controversy through which the Book has come. Theories and views which could be shaken have been removed, but the Book itself and its great revelation of God have come out of the testing unshaken, and they remain to us for ever."

A New Chapter in Christian Evidences.

The experience of the Bible Society among all races and in all lands constitutes a new and ever lengthening chapter in the great volume of Christian Evidences. The argument which that chapter contains has been excellently summed up in words which

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we borrow from a most distinguished missionary to China, Dr. J. C. Gibson, who acted as one of the two Chairmen of the Shanghai Conference in 1908. "We hear from all quarters that men have lost faith in the Bible, that it has had its day, and can never again hold with us the place that it held with our fathers. We hear of attacks on the Bible from the side of literary scholarship, and of others on the side of archæological research. . . . Does the British and Foreign Bible Society make any reply to these attacks? Does it apologize for its work? Does it ever write or print in defence of the Bible? With all its printing in countless languages—not a line! not a word! It hears all that is said, smiles at all that is written, and goes on its way!

"The supreme test of the Bible is not in the regions of scholarship and archæology. This Book, on the face of it, addresses itself to the hearts of plain men and offers them a cure for their troubles, and comfort for their sorrows. Does it in practice make good its claim?

"Now it is the glory of the Bible Society that it applies this test, and makes this experiment on a large scale. You say the Bible is a failure? Well, we shall not argue, but we shall try. We shall carry it to the cultured homes of great civilized races, and to the squalid huts of remote tribes, to quiet villages sleeping among the fields where harvests ripen, and to the battlefields of the world where all the fiercest passions of men are let loose to devastate and destroy; and we shall see what it can do."

"The Bible Society makes this testing experiment on a large scale. It has acted in the faith of those

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who know that the Bible has been the life-giving Word of God to themselves and are constrained to share it with all men. They had no need to experiment, yet what they have done is for all men a great and crucial experiment. It has been carried on now for a hundred years, in all lands and among all races, and from this most searching trial the Bible Society brings back to us the unfailing Bible, 'the word of prophecy' now indeed 'made more sure,' for it has not only brought comfort to sorrowing souls, and led sinners into the peace of forgiveness; it has also both planted and nourished the Church of God, and imparted to it that divine life which unites in one all the members of the Body of Christ. The Bible is no effete Book. It has not only come unscathed through tempests of opposition and survived the more deadly frosts of indifference. It has, by the spiritual power inherent in it and the effectual working of God the Holy Ghost through it, produced and maintained wherever it has come the sanctifying power of the divine life. But only life can produce life, and therefore it is that we affirm with a growing assurance that this is indeed the living Word of God which shall never be slain or silenced—the Word on which rests our own eternal hope—the Word which we hold forth to all men for the obedience of faith. We find in it no cunningly-devised fables, and our loyalty cleaves the more firmly to this word of prophecy which is daily made more sure to us, as there rises on our ears across wide oceans and from distant lands the swelling voice of growing multitudes of souls, new-born into the kingdom of God, who join their testimony to ours that they have found in

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this ancient Book the power and presence of our Lord Jesus Christ."

* * * * *

In the famous Tribuna of the Uffizi gallery of art at Florence, a tourist armed with his guide-book went up to the curator: "Are these your masterpieces?" he asked; "I certainly don't see much in them myself." "Sir," said the curator, "these pictures are not on their trial: it is the visitors who are on their trial." Those who see little in the Bible should realize that after so many generations of Christian experience the Bible is not for the first time on its trial now.

THE TEST OF CATHOLICITY.

"There is nothing parochial about the Bible Society."

THE RT. HON. A. J. BALFOUR.

MUCH of what has been already said illustrates the universal character of the Bible. No other book has been issued in such immense numbers. No other book has found its way everywhere into the remotest corners of the earth. No other book has learned to speak in so many tongues. It can be read to-day in every human language which possesses a literature, as well as in the speech of scores of barbarous tribes for whom no other literature exists except this. Nor must we lose sight of the fact that the printed page is now exercising a far wider and more potent influence in the world than ever before. The wonderful spread of education among non-Christian nations is multiplying year by year the missionary energy of the Bible. In the ranks of the Japanese army the war correspondent of the *Standard* newspaper declared that he could not find a single illiterate soldier, and the attendance of all children at school is more strictly enforced in Japan than in England. From the Government schools in India more than a million new readers are turned out annually. The best educated part of the Indian Empire is Burma, which, to quote the words of the last census, "enjoys an elaborate system of indigenous free education" imparted to the boys in

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every village by Buddhist monks, who thus prove schoolmasters into Christ, when they prepare their pupils to read the Burmese New Testament. In China the character in which the language is written makes reading peculiarly difficult; but an astonishing reform in the system of education is spreading fast through all the eighteen Provinces. Here, as in other Eastern lands, the power of the vernacular press is extending and increasing with rapid strides. In the Dutch East Indies forty newspapers are now published in the Malay language.

Perils of Progress.

Such progress carries with it corresponding drawbacks. As civilization and science become more and more universal, they create their own temptations and perils. We hear, for instance, of cheap Chinese versions of modern authors—not only of books like *Nicholas Nickleby* and *The Adventures of Sherlock Holmes*, but of French novels like *La Dame aux Camélias*, and we are told that China is being flooded with translations of rationalistic and agnostic literature. In the Government schools of Manchuria, boys learn scepticism imported from the West, and not a few of the students take pride in avowing that they belong to the “*Wu Shen Hui*,” or “No God Society.” In Java, “the cinematograph exhibitions all over the island make it possible for any native, by the occasional expenditure of a few cents, to gain a finished education in crime.” At fairs and festivals up and down India cheap vernacular books are sold, some of them definitely anti-Christian, and others terribly demoralizing. Is there not more urgent need than ever to provide



BURMESE GIRLS.

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the Book which above every book contains the secret of righteousness and regeneration?

No Respector of Persons.

In a previous chapter we have spoken of the universal appeal which the Bible makes to all sorts and conditions of men.

“It takes the suffering human race,
It reads each wound, each weakness clear :
And strikes its finger on the place,
And says : *Thou ailest, here and here !*”

Other books come home to particular sections and classes of mankind: they are for the educated, or for the high-born, or for the wealthy. This contains a common and catholic message which declares at the very outset that “there is no difference.” A humble fruit-gatherer in Ceylon read the first page of the Sermon on the Mount, and was well pleased. “These are very good teachings indeed,” said he, “but as we belong to the lower castes, these teachings are not for us.” The colporteur told him that our Heavenly Father is no respector of persons, and that in heaven there is no caste at all: whereupon the man was greatly astonished, and said that he would read the Gospel.

God’s Book is catholic, partly because it is not all cast in one and the same mould. Certain parts of the Bible appeal with unexpected force to different races, and to men in various stages of civilization, who read the Scriptures with other eyes than ours. We may illustrate this point by a few actual examples. When Dr. Kilgour was translating the Old

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Testament into Nepali, he found it an arduous, not to say a tedious, task to render the long chapters of ritual regulations in Leviticus; he was surprised, however, to discover that his Nepalese assistant, who was not a Christian, considered those chapters to be among the most interesting and important in the whole Pentateuch. So, again, the Chinese, who lay enormous stress on reverence for ancestors, are profoundly impressed by the first chapter of St. Matthew's Gospel, because it begins with the genealogy of our Lord, which, as a colporteur wrote last year, "goes back to our Chinese Hsia dynasty." In Egypt Moslems are attracted by the Book of Genesis, which they call "the history of the creation of the world." In China, Genesis is also a favourite, because it is "the book which tells of the beginning of things." In the south of Europe the Book of Proverbs is often purchased eagerly by Freemasons, who look back to King Solomon as the legendary founder of their craft. In heathen lands it is by no means uncommon for missionaries who are translating the Old Testament to make a version first of the Psalter and then perhaps of Genesis, and then to translate the Book of Jonah before attempting any other of the prophets. They realize that Jonah is the one thoroughly missionary book in the Old Testament, and they find that its message comes home to their converts with peculiar power.

We constantly forget that the Scriptures were not composed, primarily, for Englishmen, nor written by Europeans. This fact involves far-reaching consequences. Here is one illustration. It is frequently stated that young Indian students find great difficulty

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in understanding the language of the Authorised and Revised Versions of the English Bible. The following pronouncement, however, appeared recently in the columns of *The Indian Social Reformer*, an able and influential newspaper edited and published by non-Christians at Bombay. "The Bible is perhaps the one English book which the Indian boy feels the least difficulty in following, as the forms and ideas are those with which an Oriental is most familiar." It would be quite impossible for European boys to follow the ideas of the *Vedas* or the *Tripitaka*, however admirably translated. There is only one Book which rises above national and racial distinctions, and makes its appeal to the general heart of humanity.

The Book of the Universal Church.

But while the Bible possesses this great catholic note, and is able to speak to men of all races in their own tongue without losing the force and sweetness and charm of its message, we must admit that it appeals pre-eminently to Christians. In their estimate it stands peerless and supreme. There is but one Book for the universal Church. There is only one charter for the whole congregation of Christ's flock dispersed throughout the world. There is only one norm and standard of faith. We may quote from an address delivered by Canon Scott Holland last year at the anniversary of the Universities' Mission to Central Africa: "So, I say, if you want to be good Catholics, be Bible Christians. That is the real conclusion. The Bible is the stronghold of Catholicity. Go back there, and let us cling to the Synoptic Gos-

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pels, the Pauline Epistles, and all that is in them as expressed there by Jews. Then you will know that you are delivering the message in the shape in which it can be absorbed by every nation on the face of the globe."

This Book has been cherished above every book in the spiritual history of Christendom. In the Middle Ages we hear of precious copies of Scripture which were bound in gold and silver, and had their jewelled covers studded and embossed with tiny relics of the saints. But in truth the books and chapters of the Bible constitute one glorious reliquary of sacred experience. There is a deep sense in which we may say concerning the great verses of Scripture, "Are they not all ministering spirits, sent forth to minister to them who shall be heirs of salvation?" And if the texts had tongues, and could repeat the tale of their ministry down through the generations of the faithful, what marvels of experience they would reveal. Their biographies would be gathered from the four winds of heaven, and from the uttermost parts of the sea, "from lonely chambers, from suffering sick-beds, from the brink of the valley of the shadow of death, from scaffolds and fiery piles witnessing in sunlight, from moors and mountains beneath the stars, and in high places of the field, turning to flight the armies of the aliens."

The manuscript pages of mediæval Bibles were blazoned into rare beauty by patient hands. But if, by some miracle, the saints' experience of Scripture could shine out between its lines, what an illumination of the text would be there! Indeed, we come to the meaning of the Bible by example as well

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as by grammar. Its most penetrating commentary is written in living letters. To read the book, or any part of it, by this light of actual experience, helps us to take it home as a possession to our own hearts. As Dr. John Ker says, there are promises and precepts which seem to lie beyond our reach ; we have nothing to draw with, and the well is deep. But some one of like passions has passed that way before us, and has left a cup to be let down with his name and story graven on the rim.

The Communion of Saints.

Moreover, to study the Scripture as it has been translated into the experience of the Church, makes us realize the oneness of Christ's life throughout His far-spread family. These self-same verses in all generations have made glad the city of God. And in this common meeting-place of believers we find the fellowship of saints indeed.

“The Word dwells in us to-day with a halo of mystic vindications about it that it could not possess in the beginning. It comes to us not only as a message from God, but tremulous with the countless Amens it has awakened in the heroic souls it has fashioned and inspired. The promises upon which God's servants in every age have hoped receive back into themselves sublime reactions from the spiritual forces they have kindled within the elect, and come to us vocal with new significance. The experiences of the devout and the believing in all ages are gathered back into the Divine message by which such souls were helped and sanctified, and through this living voice within us we realize the doctrine of the communion of saints. It is in this high spiritual sense that the Church is the interpreter and the guardian of God's Word.”

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In this sense the witness of the Scriptures to Christ is verified and attested by the society of the redeemed and the forgiven, in whom and upon whom Christ has wrought His works of power. In this Protestant sense the Church does confer authority on the Bible. This is far removed from the Roman doctrine that the Bible derives its authority from the fact that ecclesiastical synods and councils have pronounced it to be true. We say with Luther: "The Church cannot give more force or authority to a book than it has in itself. A Council cannot make that to be Scripture which in its own nature is not Scripture." The Church confers authority upon the Bible, in so far as the life and experience of the saints confirm and ratify its mightiest assertions. And it is very wonderful to find how in every age and in every land the most Christlike Christians meet and are at home with one another in the pages of the New Testament. There "their speech is one, their witnesses agree." There they learn to use a common language concerning the incommunicable secrets of the heart.

One impressive aspect of this unity of spirit was brought out at the recent German Lutheran Conference held in Mölle, where Professor Meinhof delivered a striking address on the Muhammadan peril in Africa and its connection with a common language. He pointed out that one great means by which a common language is introduced among Muhammadans is the pilgrimage to Mecca. At that sacred centre devout Moslems come together from strange and remote corners of the world of Islam between Sumatra and Sierra Leone, and realize their one faith by praising one God in one and the same tongue. The Roman

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Church similarly realizes the unifying power of a common ecclesiastical language. In St. Peter's at Rome there are confessionals where strangers confess and receive absolution in all forms of speech. And a foreign priest who finds his way to Rome, though he cannot understand a single sentence of Italian, can nevertheless say Mass in any Italian church.

Professor Meinhof went on to say :—

“Are not we Evangelicals in danger lest in our narrow circle of home relationships we lose sight of catholicity? We possess nothing which corresponds to a central shrine for pilgrimage. Yet I believe that, for those who have eyes to see, there exist among us forces which make more powerfully for the oneness of the universal Church than anything in St. Peter's or at Mecca. I refer to the Bible. Though it may seem as if the translation of the Bible would open a door for error, yet experience proves that its results are the very opposite. The translation of the Bible practically leads to an astonishing unity of spirit among all Evangelicals. The goal of our Evangelical pilgrimage lies in the Scriptures. This is why we take care that the Africans shall be able to read the Bible in their mother-tongue. St. Peter's at Rome is indeed august; yet I have been still more deeply moved with what I saw in the home of the British and Foreign Bible Society at London. Our unity lies in the work of translating the Bible, and there also lies our future.”

Throughout Christendom the Bible is the one sacred Book which all Christians have venerated and to which all Christians professed to appeal. Among

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some ancient communions, indeed, the Book itself became a kind of fetish. In the Armenian and Coptic Churches the faithful might kiss it, but only the priest was privileged to turn its pages. It was revered and left unread, until, by lapse of time and change of speech, it became unreadable. In the public liturgy of nearly every unreformed Church the Scriptures are read as a rule in some ancient language which cannot be understood by common people. And there are Churches still bitterly hostile to the Bible Society's mission—which offers every man the open Bible, without note or comment, in his own mother-tongue. Wherever the Church of Rome is dominant it displays what Bishop Gore has called its "disastrous reluctance" to the free circulation of the Scriptures. We still hear of Bible-burning instigated or carried out by Roman priests in regions as far apart as Venezuela and Sardinia. In the kingdom of Greece, through prejudices which are partly political and partly ecclesiastical, the New Testament in modern Greek remains a forbidden book.

On the other hand, new proofs occur that the Ancient Oriental Churches recognize the value of the Bible and appreciate the services of the Bible Society.

At Damascus the Society's agent had an interview last year with the Orthodox Greek Patriarch of Antioch, and begged for his friendship and sympathy with our work in his diocese, which consists of the *vilayets* of Damascus and Aleppo. The Patriarch kindly promised to do what he could to facilitate the task of our colporteurs in those places where Greek Christians of his flock were to be

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found. In Travancore and Cochin nine Bishops of the Syrian Church have been presented with copies of the Society's version of the Bible in Malayalam: the gifts were accepted with sincere gratitude, and evoked the promise that special prayer should be offered on behalf of our Society and its work. At Busrah, on the Persian Gulf, the Chaldean Patriarch urged his subordinates to imitate his own example and to cultivate good feeling and amity with the Protestant mission and colporteurs.

At Jerusalem.

The Society's work in Jerusalem received, last year, high ecclesiastical approval and commendation. The Russian Archimandrite accepted a copy of the Russian Bible. Four specially-bound copies of the New Testament in Greek were presented by our representative to His Holiness the Greek Patriarch of Jerusalem, whose photograph we reproduce in this chapter. It is interesting to remember that the dignity of Patriarch was formally assigned to the Bishop of Jerusalem at the Council of Chalcedon, A.D. 451. His Holiness graciously accepted the Testaments, and showed himself deeply interested in the world-wide enterprise of the Bible Society. He expressed his surprise when he learned the number of languages into which the Scriptures have been translated, and remarked that "it was a marvellous achievement both from a religious and literary point of view."

The broad and inclusive lines on which the Bible Society is organized appealed strongly to the

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Patriarch, while its vast aims and achievements called forth his high admiration.

The following is a translation of a letter written in Greek, signed by His Holiness and sent to our agent, together with a donation to the funds of the Bible Society:—

“✠ Damianus, the Most Blessed and Holy Patriarch of the Holy City Jerusalem, and All Palestine, Syria, Arabia beyond Jordan, Cana of Galilee, and Holy Sion.

“Most Honourable Mr. C. Thomas Hooper, Director of the British and Foreign Bible Society in Egypt. We invoke Heaven’s rich blessing upon your esteemed Honour.

“We have safely received the four volumes of the New Testament sent to us by your Honour, and hereby express the very warm gratitude due to you, both for the gift itself and for the good and kind feelings which prompted it. In addition, therefore, to the fitting expression of our thanks, we offer hearty prayers unto our Lord and Saviour who feeds us with the heavenly and eternal bread of the Scriptures, beseeching Him that He may strengthen and defend you by His invincible grace in your Honour’s untiring efforts to distribute the Divine Word, which are well-pleasing unto God.

“In the Holy City Jerusalem, 6th March, 1910.

“(Signed) An earnest supplicant to the Lord on behalf of your esteemed Honour,

“✠ DAMIANUS, BISHOP OF JERUSALEM.”

In the Russian Empire.

In Siberia the Orthodox Bishop of Irkutsk gave our Agent his blessing, and desired a wide circulation for the new version of St. Matthew’s Gospel in Buriat Mongolian. The Bible Society has just printed this version for the use of the Irkutsk Branch of the Orthodox Missionary Society. It is often forgotten that the Russian Church carries



THE GREEK PATRIARCH OF JERUSALEM.

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on missionary work among Moslem and pagan tribes found in various Asiatic provinces of the Tsar's dominions. Throughout that great Empire, in which Church and State are so intimately allied, generous privileges of free travel and transport have been granted to the Bible Society for many years past, both by the State and by private firms. To show what this friendly help means, we may mention that last year members of the Society's staff in Siberia travelled altogether 40,000 miles, and their travelling expenses only amounted to £66. This will illustrate how much we owe to the Government and other railways, and to steamboat companies and owners, which grant our colporteurs free passes by rail and river, as well as free freight for our books.

In other parts of the world not a few railway and steamship companies adopt a similar policy. We gratefully acknowledge valuable help of this kind from Dutchmen in Java, from Japanese in Manchuria, and from Englishmen in India, in British Guiana, in the West Indies, and, last but not least, in the Republics of South America. Such friendly co-operation becomes a tribute of world-wide sympathy.

* * * * *

An eloquent preacher describes how a Canadian bishop encamped one evening on one bank of a great Canadian river: a company of Christian Indians were on the other. As the Englishmen gazed into the falling fire they heard a hymn across the river. This was succeeded by a hush. The song of the Red

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Men across the water drew out a song from the English, and that touched the Indians to a prayer, whose measured tones just reached them across the water. "What was the river between?" asks the bishop. On one side rose prayers and praises in the speech of Milton and Shakespeare; on the other in words borrowed from the glee of the waterfall or from the sighing of the pine-wood. Yet once again the whole earth seemed to be of one language and of one lip.

Towards Unity.

We may be thankful that in these latter days Christians everywhere are growing weary of their unhappy divisions, are longing after unity, are beginning to cherish a more catholic spirit. Is there any institution in our country so catholic as the Bible Society? No other Christian organization unites so many Christians who are severed by theological or ecclesiastical differences, but clasp hands in this sacred cause. Christianity is the religion of the Bible. We are all "Bible Christians" in the deepest sense of that name. And while so many controversies still keep English believers apart, we cling to the great Society which binds us together.

With earnest prayer and expectancy we looked forward to the World Missionary Conference which met last June in the capital of Scotland. That great assemblage, representing every Reformed Church in Christendom, was not only a council of war in the campaign against evil, but also a mighty witness to Christian unity in faith and service. We praise God for one more proof that He is kindling everywhere

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in the hearts of His children a new passion for reconciliation and reunion, a new longing for the fulfilment of Christ's unfulfilled prayer. And of such reconciliation and reunion we may see in the Bible Society itself a herald and harbinger.

THE BOOK ABOVE EVERY BOOK

Where does the Bible Society get its income?

The answer to this question may be succinctly given thus. During the year 1909–10 each sovereign which the Society received was made up as follows:—7s. 7d. came from sales of the Scriptures; 5s. 9½d. came from Free Contributions by Auxiliaries at home and in the Colonies; 3s. 7d. came from legacies; 2s. 6d. came from subscriptions, donations, collections, etc., paid in direct to the Bible House; and 6½d. from dividends.

* * *

How does the Bible Society spend its income?

Here is the answer, reduced to its simplest terms. During the year 1909–10 each sovereign which the Society expended was laid out in the following proportions:—8s. 10d. went towards preparing, printing, and binding editions of the Scriptures; 3s. 10d. went to support the Society's colportage staff—including European Sub-agents, native colporteurs, and Bible-women; 4s. 9d. went to maintain the Society's depôts and sub-depôts in the chief cities in the world, and to pay freight and carriage of the Scriptures, with salaries and travelling expenses of the Society's foreign agents; 10½d. was spent on the Society's deputation staff, home and colonial; 5d. was spent in producing reports, magazines, and other literature; 7d. was spent on postage, rates, insurance, Bible House expenses, wages, repairs, interest, exchange, etc.; 4d. was spent on allowances to old and disabled servants at home and abroad; and 4½d. was spent on the secretarial and clerical staff.

APPENDIX.

NOTICE RESPECTING REMITTANCES.

Subscriptions and donations are received at the Bible House, 146, Queen Victoria Street, London, E.C.; also at the Society's Bankers, WILLIAMS DEACON'S Bank, Limited, 20, Birchin Lane, E.C.;—advice being sent to the Secretaries at the Bible House. Cheques, Bankers' Drafts, and Post Office Orders (*on the General Post Office*), should be made payable to *The British and Foreign Bible Society*, and addressed to the Secretaries.

FORM OF A BEQUEST TO THE SOCIETY.

I bequeath the sum of _____ *Pounds sterling*
free of Legacy Duty to "THE BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE
SOCIETY," instituted in London in the year 1804, to be paid for
the purposes of the said Society to the Treasurer for the time
being thereof, whose Receipt shall be a good discharge for the
same.

Telegraphic Address.

TESTAMENTS, LONDON.

Telephone:

NO. 2036 CENTRAL.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

President: The MARQUIS OF NORTHAMPTON, K.G.

Vice-Presidents:

- | | |
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| Rev. A. M. FAIRBAIRN, D.D. | THOS. PUMPHREY, Esq. |
| 1892. The BISHOP of LICHFIELD. | GEORGE CADBURY, Esq. |
| Aid. Sir JOSEPH SAVORY, Bart. | P. F. WOOD, Esq. |
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| BISHOP JOHNSON, D.D. | Rev. R. F. HORTON, D.D. |
| Rev. J. G. ROGERS, D.D. | GENERAL BOOTH, D.C.L. |
| 1894. ROBERT HEATH, Esq. | E. PERCY HOLLANS, Esq. |
| The ARCHBISHOP of the WEST INDIES. | WILLIAMSON LAMPLOUGH, Esq. |
| ARCHDEACON SINCLAIR, D.D. | 1906. The EARL of DARTMOUTH. |
| The BISHOP of MARLBOROUGH. | The BISHOP of CARLISLE. |
| Rev. H. J. POPE, D.D. | The BISHOP of ELY. |
| J. R. HILL, Esq. | LORD STRATHCONA, G.C.M.G. |
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| The BISHOP of St. ALBANS. | E. J. EARP, Esq. |
| Rev. J. MONRO GIBSON, D.D. | 1907. The BISHOP of SOUTHAMPTON. |
| 1896. *The EARL of STAMFORD. | The BISHOP of EKETER. |
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| BISHOP STUART, D.D. | I. P. WERNER, Esq. |
| 1897. The BISHOP of PETERBOROUGH. | 1908. EARL GREY. |
| Hon. J. J. ROGERSON. | The BISHOP of SOUTH TOKYO. |
| A. S. LESLIE-MELVILLE, Esq. | Sir ANDREW H. L. FRASER, K.O.S.I. |
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| Rev. D. MACEWAN, L.D. | J. RENDEL HARRIS, Esq., Litt.D. |
| The BISHOP of WAKEFIELD. | C. D. GINSBURG, Esq., LL.D. |
| VISCOUNT WOLVERHAMPTON. | A. J. CROSFIELD, Esq. |
| 1899. The BISHOP of ST. DAVID'S. | EMIL WALSER, Esq. |
| BISHOP WELLDON, D.D. | Rev. JOHN SHARP. |
| VISCOUNT CLIFDEN. | 1909. The ARCHBISHOP of YORK. |
| Rev. CANON R. B. GIRDLESTONE. | BISHOP MONTGOMERY, D.D. |
| Rev. W. L. WATKINSON, D.D. | Sir ROBERT HART, Bart., G.C.M.G. |
| ROBERT BARCLAY, Esq. | Rev. Preb. H. E. FOX. |
| HENRY MORRIS, Esq. | Rev. J. CAMPBELL GIBSON, D.D. |
| 1900. BISHOP INGHAM, D.D. | Rev. W. W. JACKSON, D.D. |
| The BISHOP of LIVERPOOL. | Rev. E. WARDLAW THOMPSON, D.D. |
| The MASTER of TRINITY. | Rev. GEORGE BROWN, D.D. |
| Rev. F. W. MACDONALD. | G. A. GRIERSON, Esq., C.I.E., Ph.D. |
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| Sir GEORGE HAYTER CHUBB, Bart. | 1910. LORD LANGFORD, K.C.V.O. |
| The Rt. Hon. Sir SAMUEL J. WAY, | The BISHOP of TRURO. |
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| LORD ALVERSTONE, G.C.M.G., | The MASTER of the ROLLS. |
| Lord Chief Justice. | The Rev. LORD WILLIAM GASCOYNE |
| Sir G. E. KNOX. | CECIL. |
| Rev. GRIFFITH JOHN, D.D. | Sir J. T. DILLWYN LLEWELYN, Bart. |
| 1902. The BISHOP of CALCUTTA. | Rev. J. D. JONES. |
| The BISHOP of UGANDA. | Rev. ALEXANDER CONNELL. |
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| Rev. W. T. DAVISON, D.D. | T. B. FERENS, Esq., M.P. |

* Deceased since March 31, 1910.

BRITISH AND FOREIGN BIBLE SOCIETY.

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ROBERT BARCLAY, Esq.

Chairman of Committee :
WILLIAMSON LAMPLOUGH, Esq.

Committee :
Elected May 4, 1910.

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F. S. Bishop, Esq. - - 1908	W. C. Parkinson, Esq. - - 1905
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T. P. Newman, Esq. - - 1904	Sir And. Wingate, K.C.I.E. 1903
*A. W. Oke, Esq. - - 1910	A. W. Young, Esq. - - 1891

* Not on the Committee last year.

The Committee meet, as a rule, at the Bible House, 146, Queen Victoria Street, E.C., on the first and third Mondays in every Month, at Half-past Eleven o'clock; and oftener, as business may require.

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The Rev. JOHN H. RITSON, M.A.

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{ The Rev. R. KILGOUR, D.D., *Editorial Superintendent.*
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Mr. A. R. Stark,
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P.O. Box 69, Kingston, Jamaica.

Rev. W. B. Cooper, M.A.,
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† *Appointed and supported locally.*

THE BOOK

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Birmingham.</i> | |
-
- Rev. H. Starmer,
12, Cedar Road, Norwich.
- Mr. Robert F. Crosland, J.P.,
Oldfieldnook, Gleckheaton.

SUMMARY.

The British and Foreign Bible Society exists for one single object—to supply every man with the Holy Scriptures in his own mother-tongue. It concerns itself solely with circulating that Book which is the charter of Christ's Church throughout all the world. And in this aim it unites Christians of almost every communion.

The Year 1909-1910.

Last year the Society issued the unprecedented number of 6,620,024 books—including 843,784 Bibles, 1,198,226 New Testaments, and 4,578,014 smaller Portions of Scripture. This result is 685,000 in excess of the output in the previous year, and constitutes a record in the history of the Society. Three times in the last seven years the total has exceeded 5,900,000, but hitherto it has always been below 6,000,000 copies.

The immense growth in the Society's issues has been a growth of Portions, for the most part of Gospels and Psalters, which circulate mainly in the mission field. These are sold at nominal prices, representing a mere fraction of what they cost to produce and distribute. And the rising demand for these books year by year shows at least with what splendid success the Bible Society fulfils its vital function as the partner and pioneer of Christian missions.

From the Bible House in London 2,395 cases of Scriptures, weighing 293 tons, were shipped abroad during the past year. But only about 28 per cent. of our total issues go out from London. The Society's editions are produced and published, as far as possible, in the countries where they will be sold and read. Of the 844,000 Bibles circulated, 493,000 were English; and among these, nineteen out of every twenty were the English Authorised Version. Nearly 3,000 volumes went out in embossed type for the blind.

The Society prints the Scriptures at about fifty different places, and in sixty different alphabets and characters.

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The total issues by the Society since its foundation have exceeded 222,000,000 copies of the Scriptures, complete or in parts. Of these, more than eighty-three millions have been in English.

The Work at Home.

Of last year's issues, 1,120,182 volumes were in English or Welsh, and circulated mainly in the British Empire. Of the Society's English Penny Testament, 108,508 were issued, making a total of 9,052,953 during the last twenty-five years.

The English Scriptures issued last year included 125,079 copies of the Society's 6d. Bible; 81,035 copies of the 10d. Bible; and 53,477 copies of the new 1s. School Bible. The issues also included over 33,000 Bibles and Testaments in the English Revised Version. About 46,000 copies were in Welsh.

In England and Wales the Society spent about £9,000 last year, mainly in direct grants of Scriptures—free or at greatly reduced rates—to the Sunday Schools and Home Missions of nearly every Christian communion, and to all the varied agencies of religious and philanthropic activity.

Nearly all the English and Welsh Institutions for befriending the blind obtain the Scriptures which they require from the Bible House, at less than half the cost of their production.

Students at Theological and Missionary Colleges in England and Wales, who need such assistance, receive as gifts over 1,100 Testaments in Hebrew or Greek each year. The Society also presents outgoing missionaries with Bibles or Testaments in the vernaculars of the fields in which they labour.

A subsidy of £500 a year is given to the London Biblewomen and Nurses' Mission for the maintenance of over 90 Biblewomen, who, during the year ending December 31, 1909, sold 1,687 copies of the Scriptures among the poor living in the slums of London.

Translation and Revision.

The Society's list of versions now includes the names of **FOUR HUNDRED AND TWENTY-FOUR** distinct forms of speech. This means the complete Bible in 105 different languages; the New Testament in 103 more languages; and at least one book of Scripture in 216 other languages.

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To print these languages, sixty different sets of characters are required. Thirty-four new names have been added to the list during the last five years.

The Society's expenditure last year for translating, revising, printing and binding the Scriptures was £106,953.

In embossed type for the blind the Society has helped to provide Scriptures in over thirty different languages.

The Partner of Missions.

The Bible Society co-operates with the missionaries of almost every Christian communion in preparing the versions which they need. It prints the editions, bears the loss involved in their sale at reduced prices, and pays the carriage of the books to the mission stations. Where colportage is undertaken to facilitate distribution, the Society also makes grants towards the support of colporteurs working under the missionaries' supervision.

From the Bible Society the Church of England, with comparatively insignificant exceptions, obtains almost all the Scriptures required for its foreign missions.

The Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts has procured Scriptures from the Bible Society in seventy-one languages. The Church Missionary Society has used one hundred and seven different translations which come from the Bible House. Equally important help is rendered to the Universities' Mission to Central Africa, the Melanesian Mission, and the South American Missionary Society.

Nonconformist Foreign Missions obtain the bulk of all the Scriptures they use, directly or indirectly, from the Bible Society.

It furnishes the London Missionary Society with the Scriptures in fifty-nine different languages, and the Methodist Missionary Societies of Great Britain and her Colonies with ninety versions. Presbyterian Missions throughout the world use one hundred and thirty-one of its versions. It published the Kongo version for the Baptist Missionary Society, and also supplies many of their stations in China and Jamaica. The China Inland Mission and other undenominational societies obtain from the Bible Society practically all the Scriptures they use.

THE BOOK

The enterprises and triumphs of Christian Missions are creating as many new and imperious claims upon this Society—which has never refused to publish a duly authenticated version of the Scriptures in a new tongue. Each new tribe evangelized, each fresh language reduced to writing and grammar, each new convert baptized, means a new claim for help from the resources of the Bible House—help which is most gladly given, on such terms that it creates no charge upon the funds of the Mission which is aided thereby.

In Foreign Lands.

The Society maintains depôts in about a hundred of the chief cities of the world.

It employs over 1,100 native Christian colporteurs who were continuously at work throughout the year 1909, supervised by the Society's foreign Agents, or its missionary friends. These colporteurs sold last year 2,900,000 copies.

It supports 600 native Christian Biblewomen, mainly in the East, in connection with forty different missionary organisations.

The Society's expenditure on colporteurs and Biblewomen during 1909—including grants from the Centenary Fund—amounted altogether to £47,520.

Auxiliaries.

At the close of 1909 the Society had 5,269 Auxiliaries, Branches, and Associations in England and Wales. During 1909 as many as 4,801 meetings were held, and 3,414 sermons preached, on behalf of the Society.

Outside the United Kingdom the Society has about 2,700 Auxiliaries and Branches, mainly in the British Colonies. Many of these carry on Bible distribution vigorously in their own localities, besides sending generous annual contributions to the Bible House in London.

The Centenary Fund.

The Committee have followed out their policy of devoting this Fund for the most part to definite special objects, involving capital expenditure, but also relieving the Society's annual charges. Further sums have been laid out in securing sites, depôts, or other premises at important centres, mainly in the

ABOVE EVERY BOOK

East. Grants have also been voted for new versions and editions of the Scriptures, and for extended colportage in China, in Korea, in Japan, in Burma, and in South America. Altogether £141,668 of this Fund has already been spent.

Expenditure.

The total payments from the General Fund for the past year have been £242,006. This is an increase of £5,444 over the total of the previous year.

In producing editions of the Scriptures, the Committee have laid out £106,953; this is £4,077 more than in the previous year. The cost of foreign depôts—£34,131—shows a decrease of £1,658. On the other hand, the amount spent from the General Fund on colportage—£44,953—has risen by £1,550. Other items of expenditure show an increase amounting to £1,475.

Receipts.

The general receipts for the year were £233,722—showing a falling off of £3,591 as compared with the figures for 1907-8.

Examining the several items of this total, we find that the total receipts from sales during the past year have amounted to £89,121, against £92,265 in the previous year. This decrease of £3,144 is mainly due to a reduction in the amount received from foreign sales; the proceeds of home sales have remained almost stationary.

Legacies.

The Legacies received during the past year, amounting altogether to £58,998, show a great increase. It is the Committee's rule, however, to use as income from this source in any year the average of the Legacies received during the previous seven years. Acting on this rule, the amount from legacies to be now carried into income is £42,052, the balance being placed in the Legacy Equalization Fund.

Free Contributions.

Perhaps the most significant item in the Society's income is supplied by the Free Contributions from its Auxiliaries at home.

THE BOOK

During the year these Home Auxiliaries have paid in £58,109—a decrease of £1,958. Our regret at this falling off is all the keener in face of the inevitable expansion of the Society's work with which we are confronted. When the Committee laid plans for celebrating our Centenary, the first object which they set before themselves was to increase the Society's normal income by £15,000 a year. That object has certainly not been realized; and nothing is more necessary to-day than to multiply our annual subscribers.

The Colonial Auxiliaries last year have sent £9,805—a welcome increase of £1,212. Thus the total Free Contributions have amounted to £67,914 against £68,660 in 1908-9—a net decrease of £746.

We may mention that £228 has come from the Republics of the Andes, £319 from the Yoruba Auxiliary at Lagos, £562 from Johannesburg, £3,162 from Australia, and £1,513 from New Zealand. In Canada the united Auxiliaries raised altogether the splendid sum of over £21,000: much of this was spent on extended Bible work in the Dominion, but a Free Contribution of £3,966 has been remitted to London. The Hibernian Bible Society's Contribution has risen to £1,622.

A Deficit.

Payments and receipts, under sundry Special Funds, raised the Society's Total Receipts last year to £234,728, and the Total Expenditure to £242,890. Thus the Cash Account shows a deficiency of £8,162 on the year's working.

* * * * *

Since the Annual Meeting in May, 1909, ten more of the Society's Vice-Presidents have entered into their rest and reward: Bishop Barry, formerly of Sydney; Canon Fausset, of York; Dr. R. N. Cust, the Indian civilian and student of languages; the Rev. Dr. W. H. Dallinger, F.R.S., the distinguished man of science; Dean Lefroy, of Norwich, the eloquent ecclesiastic; Mr. John Cory, of Cardiff, the munificent philanthropist; Mr. T. Anthony Denny; and our venerable fellow-worker, Mr. Alexander McArthur, at the age of 95; with two other friends who will long be kept in affectionate remembrance at the Bible House—Mr. Joseph Pollard and Mr. G. F. Sutton.



Photo by

IN A NEW ZEALAND FOREST.

C. Spencer.

ABOVE EVERY BOOK

The Committee have to mourn the death of one of their own colleagues—Mr. George Maddox, of Hampstead, who had been a member of the Committee since 1905.

The Staff.

Mr. C. T. Hooper has been appointed Agent at Alexandria.

The Rev. J. A. Mesnard, of the French Methodist Church, has been appointed the Society's Sub-agent in Senegambia.

Miss Edmunds has been appointed Lady Assistant in the Home Department.

After more than twenty-two years' service the Rev. Dr. Cynddylan Jones has resigned the post of District Secretary for South Wales, to which he was appointed in 1887. The Rev. D. Eurof Walters, M.A., B.D., of the English Congregational Church, Merthyr Tydvil, has been appointed as his successor.

The Rev. W. F. Hodge has resigned his post as District Secretary for Yorkshire, and is succeeded by the Rev. H. K. Marsden, M.A., senior curate of St. Alkmund's, Derby.

The Rev. H. T. H. Wightwick, M.A., has resigned his post as District Secretary for East Anglia, having accepted the Principalship of the Lawrence Military School, Murri, Panjab.

THE BOOK

CONDENSED STATEMENT OF RECEIPTS
EXTRACTED FROM THE ANNUAL REPORT
FOR THE YEAR ENDING

RECEIPTS.

FROM SALES OF SCRIPTURES.

Sales through Trade Depôts, Auxiliary and other Societies... ..	£31,298 11 8
Sales in the Society's Foreign Agencies	57,822 6 9
	<hr/>
	89,120 18 5

FREE INCOME.

Contributions from Auxiliaries	67,914 3 9
Annual Subscriptions, Donations, Legacies, &c. (paid in London)	77,693 6 10

£234,728 9 0

ABOVE EVERY BOOK

AND PAYMENTS OF THE BIBLE SOCIETY,
(GENERAL AND SPECIAL FUNDS),
MARCH 31st, 1910.

PAYMENTS.

For translating and revising the Scriptures, and for paper, printing and binding	£107,257 11 2
For rent, taxes, establishment, &c., of over 100 Foreign Depôts and Warehouses in the chief cities in the world, grants to other Depôts, salaries of foreign Agents, De- positaries, &c.	49,864 7 10
Towards the maintenance of Colporteurs and Biblewomen	45,483 10 4
For the Bible House staff and expenses of the House in London, District Secretaries, travelling expenses, and grants to assist kindred societies in Bible distribution ...	28,830 18 9
For London Warehouse expenses and staff, report, literature, freight and carriage of Scriptures, &c.	11,453 16 8
	£242,890 4 9

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